



















A HISTORY OF ENGLISH FURNITURE

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# A HISTORY OF ENGLISH FURNITURE

BY PERCY MACQUOID, R.I.

With Plates in Colour after Shirley Slocombe,  
and numerous Illustrations selected and  
arranged by the Author

THE AGE OF WALNUT



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## CHAPTER I



ON the third of September 1659 the Lord Protector Oliver Cromwell died, and with him died the simple taste, that, owing to dearth of imagination, had gradually drifted into the commonplace. Had this taste continued, the evolution must have been devoid of artistic interest, and would have added no rung in the ladder of the beautiful, as the initial motives were not founded on true principles.

The Restoration of the Monarchy was accompanied by entirely new forms of thought, for not only were the tastes of the sovereign very strongly tinged with those of France and Flanders, but the return here of a large number of adherents who had shared his exile in these countries, created a sudden change of fashion and manners in strong contrast to the existing conditions of social England. Owing to personal charm and easy familiarity of manner towards those who surrounded him, the new King was not only easy of access, but a very attractive model. The average English country home was, however, at first but little influenced by the licence of the Court, and the bulk of the people openly resented the immorality and luxury of Whitehall, but gradually this luxury left its mark upon a nation, which till this time had been content with simplicity, for the eccentric extravagances of the very rich in the preceding reigns were by no means representative of English taste. By 1673 this tendency towards extravagance must have been widespread, as John Evelyn wrote in that year, describing a visit to the Countess of Arlington, as follows :

‘She carried us up into her new dressing-room at Goring House, where was a bed, two glasses, silver jars, and vases, cabinets, and other so rich furniture as I had seldom seen ; to this excess of superfluity were we now arrived, and that not only at Court, but almost universally, even to wantonness and profusion.’

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A few years later, Celia Fiennes writes in her diary about the household of an apothecary in Bury St. Edmunds, that

'This house is the new mode of building; 4 roomes of a floore pretty sizeable and high, well furnished, a drawing roome and Chamber full of China and a damaske bed Embroydered: 2 other Roomes, Camlet and Mohaire beds; a pretty deale of plaite in his wives Chambers and parlours below, and a large shop.'

This description of a tradesman's

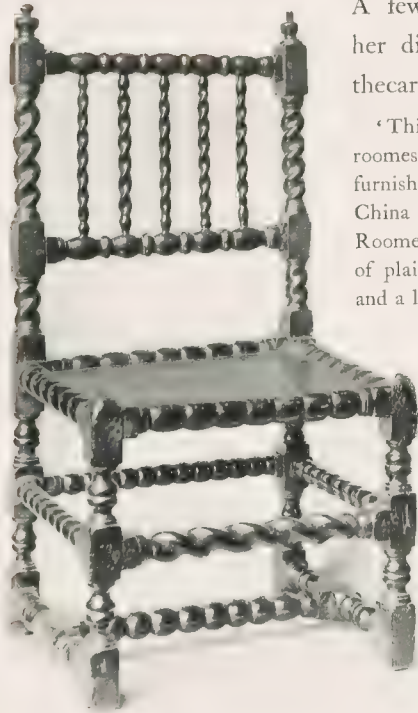


FIG. 1.—WALNUT TURNED CHAIR.  
Height, 3 feet; width, 1 foot 6 inches.

domicile in a country town proves very clearly that, in twenty years, the desire of rich furnishing had spread to the middle classes.

Towards the end of the seventeenth century, the last details, and nobility of proportion in Elizabethan decoration and furniture, disappeared, giving way to the somewhat exaggerated mouldings



FIG. 2.—BEECH TURNED CHAIR.  
Property of the DUKE OF DEVONSHIRE.

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and contrasted curves, prompted by the vagaries of the Italian artists Lorenzo Bernini and Francesco Borromini. The new forms found their way here through France and Flanders, and obtained a sure footing when modified to suit the quieter taste of this country. Although picturesque in the more elaborate and later developments, this style was only redeemed from frivolity by faultless execution. This change

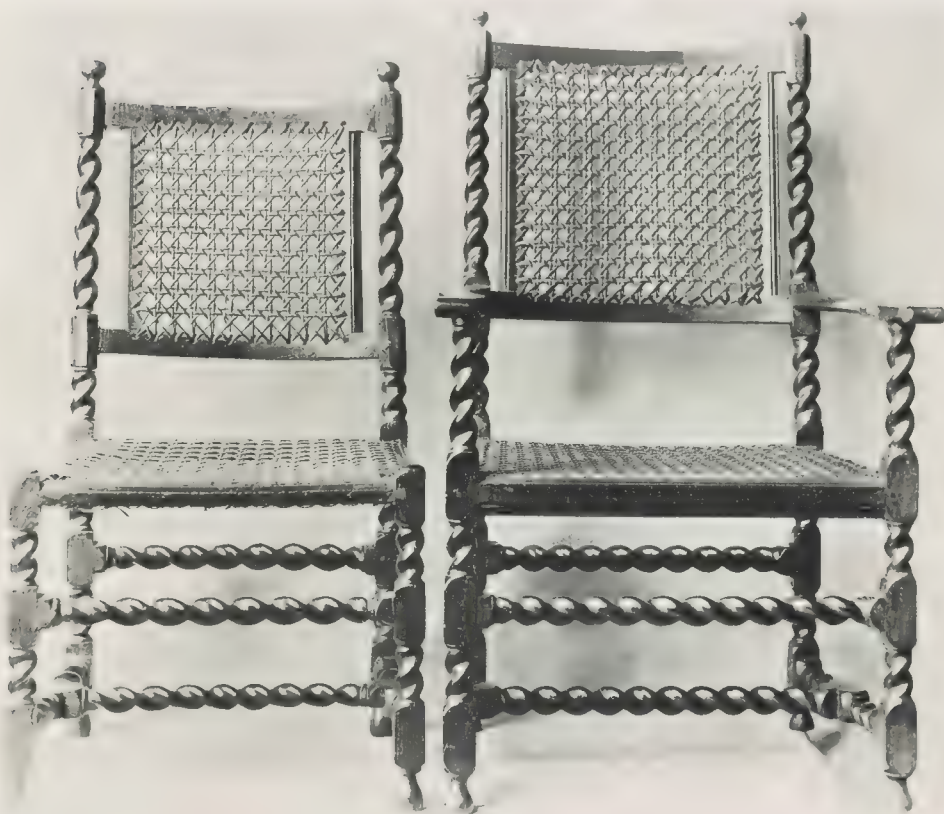


FIG. 3.—WALNUT CHAIRS.

(a) Height, 3 feet 6 inches; width, 2 feet.

(b) Height, 3 feet 2 inches; width, 1 foot 8 inches.



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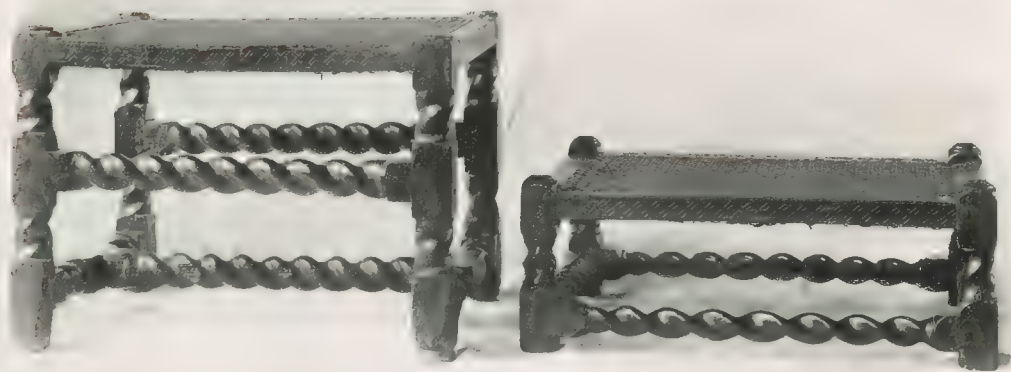


FIG. 4.—WALNUT STOOL AND BED-STEP. Property of FRANK GREEN, Esq.

naturally was not effected in weeks or months, but represented a long and deliberate evolution.

The Protector, by the year 1657, to the disappointment of the majority of his followers, had assumed certain forms of state, pomp, and ceremony; and consequently society, in a rather ponderous manner, had aroused itself during the last two or three years of his government. The inventory of his rooms at Hampton Court Palace proves that some of the finest state furniture had been reserved for his own use, the subjects of the tapestries retained in the bedroom being by no means in accordance with his austere views. Owing to this attempt at a court and semi-state, gayer furniture once more struggled into fashion, and the following list of possessions of the newly widowed Countess of Warwick—who was redecorating her house in honour of her approaching fourth nuptials with the Earl of Manchester—shows that in this respect the tide was in reality turning before the Restoration. In the withdrawing-room mention is made of

‘Two complete suites, one of blew wrought velvet, fringed with blew, another in Crimson figured satten, with silk fringe and gilt nailes. Four crimson wrought

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window curtains lined with crimson wrought satten, and one greate crimson velvett Cabinett, each suite has chaires, stooles, and carpet to match. A crimson figured satten bed trimmed with imbroidered buttons and loopes, with carpet, chaires and stooles suteable, two little china carpets with colored silks and gold, one scarlet cloth bed lined with satten, a counterpane of satten trimmed with gold and silver fringe, and a rich gold and silver ffringe about the vallins.'

Another bed is upholstered in 'carnation quilted satten,' and a fourth in 'grene cloathe with Isabella taffety and sheetes edged with purle.' Her widow's bed—which must have been more for show than use—is described as of 'fyne blacke imbroidery, with a sheete wrought with blacke silke, and blacke chairs, stooles and carpet to match.'

For some time previous to the Restoration walnut had been adopted as a light wood suitable to carry these silks and satins. A vast number of these trees had been planted during Elizabeth's reign, and their timber had by the middle of the seventeenth century attained maturity. The walnut was imported from Persia into Italy about the date of the Christian era, and was brought over here with the elm, yew, and other trees during the Roman occupation, but the first distinct notice of its regular cultivation in this country is in 1562. Throughout Italy, France, and Spain this wood was used freely for furniture during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, but, owing to its scarcity in England, was in Elizabethan and Jacobean times only introduced as a decoration in conjunction with oak. Occasionally, as

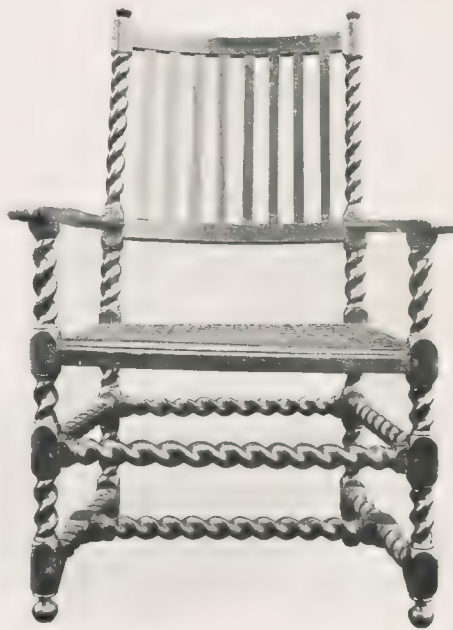


FIG. 5.—WALNUT TURNED CHAIR.  
Property of A. L. RADFORD, Esq.

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has been shown, pieces were made almost entirely of walnut; this timber, however, was probably imported from abroad.

The new style that commenced in England about the middle of the seventeenth century was particularly suitable for the employment of walnut, as twists and curves, when on the cross-grain, were less liable to chip in this wood than in the more porous oak; and although the general construction and lining of cabinets and small furniture continued to be made of oak, the outer surfaces were veneered with walnut, with applied mouldings worked in the same wood. In chairs, the lightness derived from walnut was at once appreciated; but our ancestors, by the end of the century, had discovered its liability to decay by worm, and welcomed the new substitute provided in mahogany.

Fig. 1 shows in its walnut rails, uprights, and stretchers an interesting combination of twisted and knobbed turning, and is of a date just previous to the Restoration. The seat panel, sunk to hold the squab, is of oak, and the chair has its original varnish. Fig. 2 is another of these turned chairs, somewhat later in date, and made of beech; the back is composed of a series of carefully turned balusters, with uprights of a sturdy type; the stretchers are ringed, and rushing has replaced the

original seat panel. Fig. 3 is from a set of chairs, turned throughout in a neat twist; the backs and seats are early examples of the new fashion of caning. This in (a) is original, large in the mesh, of about the date 1660; the framing to receive the caning is left plain, but in many instances the frames of these chairs will be found lightly incised with a diagonal pattern. It should be

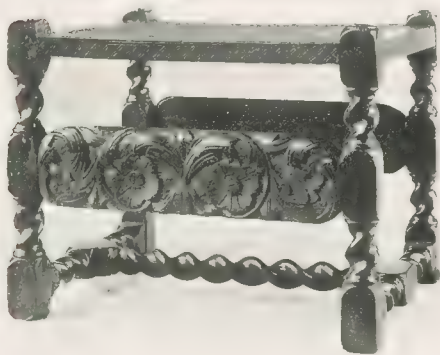


FIG. 6. WALNUT STOOL. Property of FRANK GREEN, Esq.

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noticed that the rails of the back are now slightly curved, and that in (*b*) the arms are flat and bowed; the cresting found on previous arm-chairs is omitted, and round finials are the solitary attempt at decoration. Fig. 4 (*a*) is a stool or tabouret from a somewhat similar set, while (*b*) is a bed-step of the same description; the incised pattern on the seat-rail is clearly visible in these two last specimens. An alternative to caning in these plain turned chairs was the insertion of a number of flat uprights in the back; there are several examples of this description at Hardwick, and fig. 5, from another collection, is an arm-chair treated in this manner. All these specimens are a distinct departure from anything that had been made before, for up to this time, except for the so-called Yorkshire and Derbyshire chairs, the backs to chairs were in almost every instance solid, either panelled or padded. These twisted chairs are mentioned by Mary Verney in a letter of 1664, as follows:—‘For a drawing roome i should have 2 sqobs and 6 turned woden chairs of the haith of the longe seates. Be pleased also to by a tabel and stands of the same coler.’ An answer to this is returned, ‘That no tolerable chairs can be found under seven shillings a piece and the sqobs ten shillings.’

It is interesting to follow the evolution of this new form of chair, so far as it continues to be invested with its first motive. The stool (fig. 6) is contemporary with fig. 4, and of the same design, save for the introduction of a flat stretcher coarsely carved with roses and acanthus. This broad carved stretcher now for the first time made its appearance in chairs, stools, couches, and day-beds, and lasted so long as the original type of these objects continued to be made. The decoration on these stretchers was repeated as a cresting to the chairs, and consisted of large and flat scrolls of acanthus centring in flowers or fruit, amidst which was often introduced a crown supported by cherubs, in allusion to the restoration of the Monarchy. The character of this ornament resembles that found on the silver-plate between 1665 and 1675, and, though picturesque and barbaric, was but a sudden and uneducated effort



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against the universal dulness of the Cromwellian period. Plate I. (a) is an arm-chair of this description, and a good example of the type made in such large quantities during the first years of Charles II.'s reign ; they were

evidently often made in sets, with and without arms. In a misleading manner they are invariably catalogued as 'oak chairs' at sales, though on examination not one in a hundred will be found to be of this wood.

Fig. 7 is a Welsh variety of this kind made in oak, and the difference of treatment is very apparent. Fig. 8 is a baby chair of Restoration make, where cherubims form the centre decoration of heading and stretcher; parts of the front legs are knobbed in order to receive the foot-rest, which is missing. An altogether better class of design and workmanship is shown in fig. 9, where the carving is more delicate and artistic in treatment; the cherubs support a vase of flowers, and it corresponds in decoration to the silver-plate of 1679; the supports to the arms were so worm-eaten that they have been restored by the present owner. In Plate I. (b), of about the same date, the element of the decorated

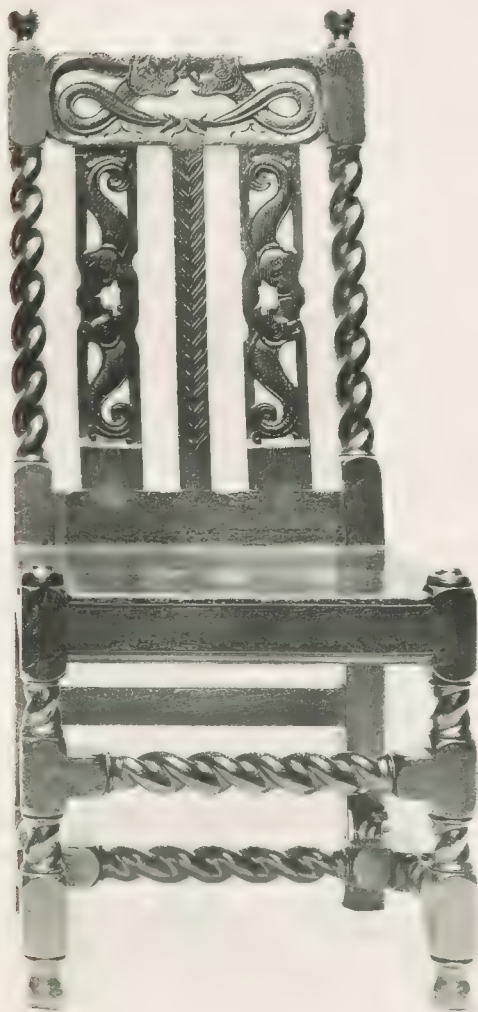


FIG. 7.—OAK CHAIR. Property of ERNEST CROFTS, Esq.



PLATE I (AGE OF WALNUT)

(a) CHAIR

HEIGHT OF BACK, 3 FEET 10 INCHES  
" OF SEAT, 1 FOOT  $4\frac{1}{2}$  "  
DEPTH " 1 " 5 "

PROPERTY OF

P. MACQUOID, Esq.

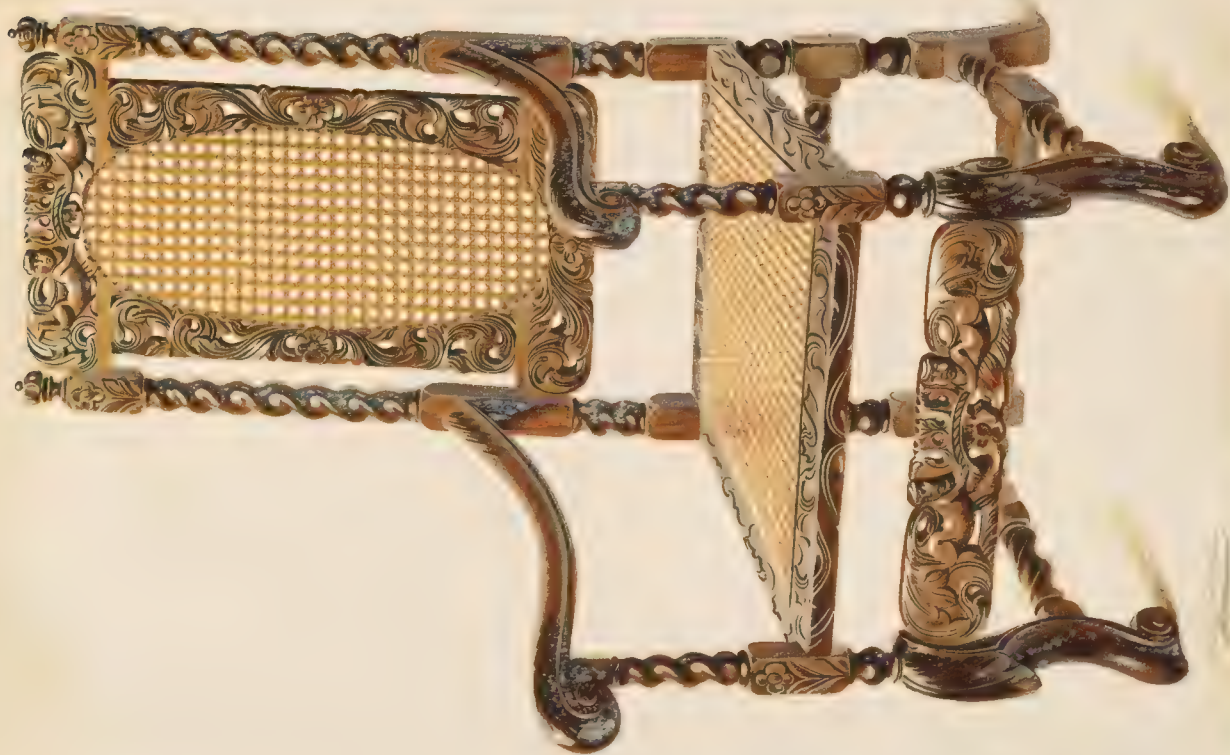
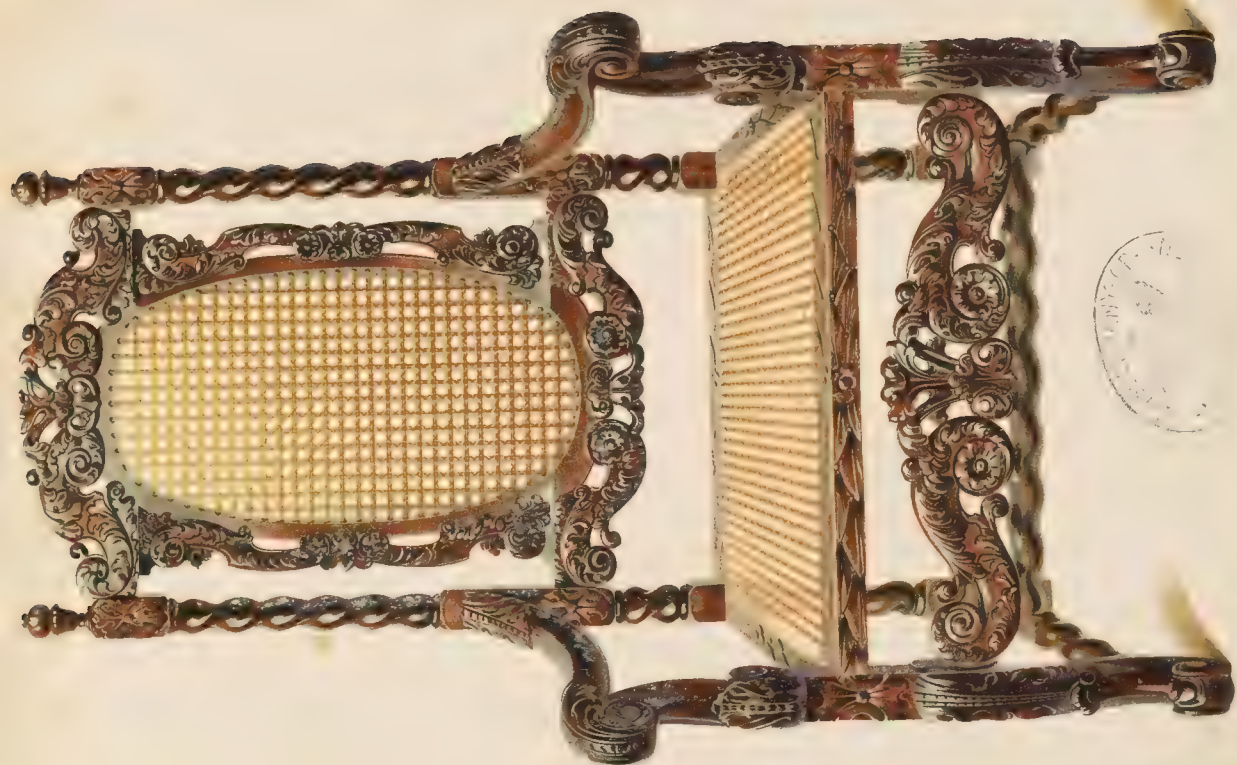
(b) CHAIR

HEIGHT OF BACK, 3 FEET 10 INCHES  
" OF SEAT, 1 FOOT 5 "  
DEPTH " 1 " 6 "

PROPERTY OF

ARTHUR S. COPE, Esq.









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C scroll is preponderant, and the carving is of extremely fine quality; the arms have a bold roll over, and are well carved on the upper surface; the supports to these and the legs are gracefully curved and shouldered with beaded acanthus, and the front stretcher centres in a fleur-de-lys. The caning, which at this period became finer, is original on both seat and back. Figs. 10 and 11 are this Restoration type without arms, and of an altogether coarser quality. Fig. 10 is another well-known variety, in which the crown is introduced five times, the finials also repeating the same detail; the caning has been replaced by a panel seat, and the lower stretcher is missing. The scrolled leg, which later developed into the so-called cabriole form, was introduced into England as a fashion on these chairs, though the twisted leg was not finally discarded for many years. Fig. 12 is a chair from Gwydyr Castle; in this instance a broad central splat takes the place of the caning, and is carved in a manner strongly indicative of the French patterns that were being introduced from the Court of Louis XIV., though the rest of the work retains the original English freedom; in this case an eagle is introduced as a central ornament. Fig. 13 is a still later specimen of the finer type of these arm-chairs; the uprights of the back are balustered, and the scrolled legs are set in an oblique manner to receive the cross stretchers. Fig. 14, in which some necessary restorations have been made in oak, shows the Restoration pattern in its decadence, but the chair possesses interest as having been made during the three years' reign of James II., and evidently for use in his household, as the cresting

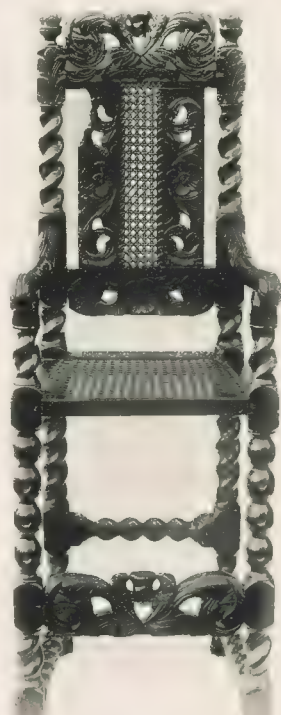


FIG. 8. —WALNUT CHILD'S CHAIR.  
Height, 3 feet 7 inches; width of seat, 1 foot 3 inches.  
Property of SIR EDMUND and LADY ELTON.

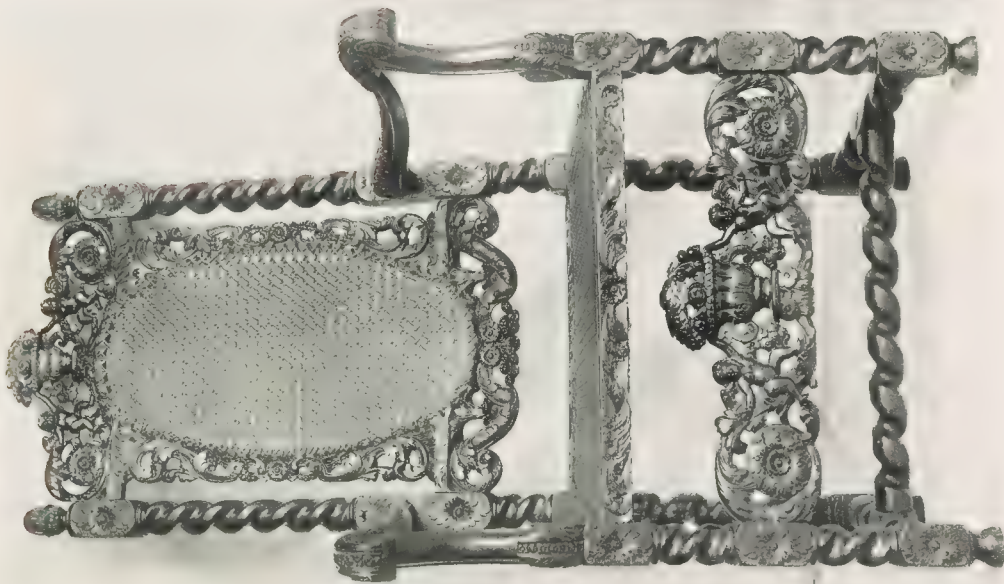


FIG. 9.—WALNUT CHAIR.  
Property of SIR CHARLES LAWES-WITTEWONGE, Bart.

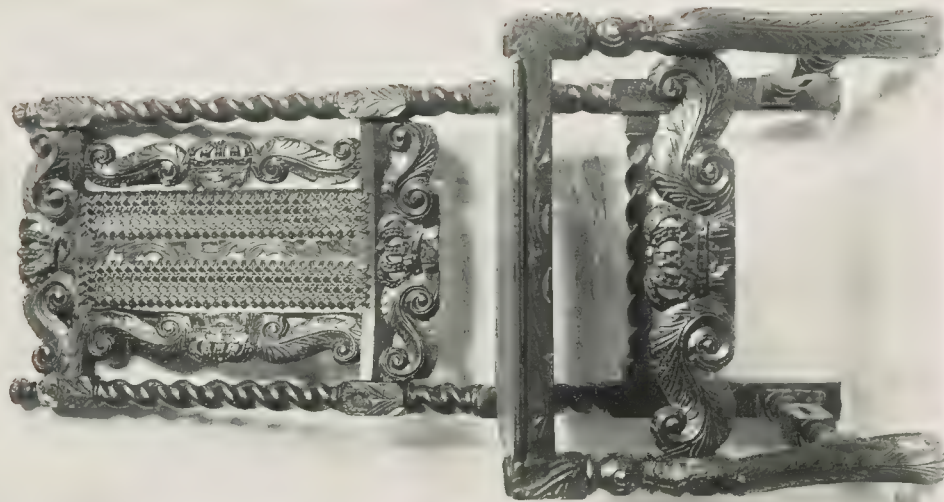


FIG. 10.—WALNUT CHAIR. Height, 3 feet 8 inches.  
Property of LORD MOSTYN.

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bears the arms of England; the uprights of the back, which are still twisted, finish in human heads; the back is formed of a narrow panel of carving, framed in an open and feeble scrolling, amidst which are the inevitable cherubs, who have descended from the cresting, and bear shields with the letters I. R.; the front stretcher is thin in design, and the cherubs that bear the crown are peculiarly shapeless. Another point of interest is the introduction of the roughly carved animals couchant as feet to the front legs, a finish that will be seen also on the chairs in fig. 27.

The revival of the day-bed, attendant on a more luxurious mode of living, is proved by the number of these in existence of post-Restoration date, and the extreme rarity of specimens before that time. Doubtless the soldiers, quartered in so many houses of importance during the war, had caused great destruction to all forms of couches that could have been utilised as beds, and the rough usage that ensued must soon have rendered them useless. The new day-beds repeated the motives of the Restoration chairs, and followed exactly the same evolution, the backs being adjustable by means of chains or chords. Fig. 15 is one of the early and simple type of about 1660; the back rest is roughly carved with large roses and acanthus, the sides of the frame are lightly incised, and the seat caned to receive a squab that would have been covered with silk, velvet, or needle-work; the legs and stretchers repeat the twist of the early chairs. In fig. 16, a few years later in date, the stretcher and cresting are carved with cherubs and crown; the back is a fixture, and velvet replaces the original caning. Fig. 17 is a much later specimen, which, from the form of the hooped scroll of its stretchers and the clubby curved legs, with their pear-shaped tops, is probably as late as the accession of William III.; the very fine caning of the back, the broken pediment of the tall heading, with its wide ogeed mouldings, also pointing to this date. After this time day-beds ceased to be carved, and were upholstered.

These carved, high-backed, caned chairs and couches, with their brilliant silk cushions, must have been most becoming frames to those who



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used them. The revival of colour was the first protest against the greys, browns, and drabs of the previous decade, and represents the early Carolean feeling of fashionable decoration which was presided over by Castlemaine and Gwyn. What followed later in the reign was more emphasised in style and more gorgeous in colour, being prompted by the influence of Louis XIV. and the Frenchwoman Louise de Keroualle; the latter, while leading the



FIG. 11.—WALNUT CHAIR. Property of  
FRANK GREEN, Esq.



FIG. 12.—WALNUT CHAIR. Height, 3 feet 10 inches;  
width, 1 foot 9 inches. Property of the EARL OF CARRINGTON.

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fashion here, combined the offices of mistress to the English king and spy to the French king. These women of the Court had the greatest influence on matters relating to furnishing, and lavished enormous sums of money in decoration, thereby creating entirely new fashions. The male favourites of previous reigns, though they largely indulged in the building of beautiful houses, with the finest architectural decorations, took much more



FIG. 13.—WALNUT CHAIR.  
Property of H. MARTIN GIBBS, Esq.



FIG. 14.—WALNUT CHAIR. Property of  
ERNEST CROFTS, Esq.

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interest in their retinues, equipages, horses, and personal adornments, than in novelties of furniture and luxurious comforts.

It is quite possible to form a correct picture of these people, even to minute details, so perfect in condition are many of the things that have come down to us, so modern were their methods, and so near was their civilisation to our own. The oak bird-cage (fig. 18), which is about the date 1670, is in construction like those of to-day; in such a cage Nell Gwyn might have kept her white sparrows, then so fashionable as pets. Fig. 19 is a china cupboard (now filled with military relics) of about the date 1675, but as modern in feeling as the bird-cage. Evelyn makes constant references in his diary to the then existing rage for collecting china and small curiosities, and from his description these collections evidently differed but little from those of to-day. We read also that one of the King's mistresses, the Duchess of Mazarin, was in the habit of personally searching the ships that had freshly arrived from India for Oriental curiosities. In fig. 19 the framing of the sides and doors are faced with walnut,

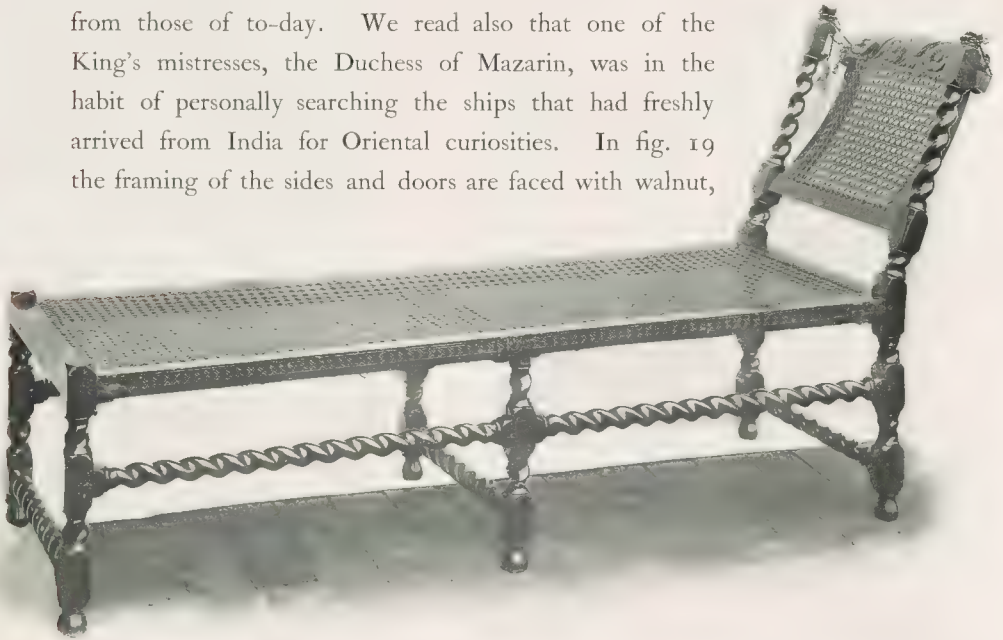


FIG. 15.—WALNUT DAY-BED. Height, 1 foot 3 inches; width, 1 foot 9 inches; length, 5 feet 3 inches. Property of C. E. KEMPE, Esq.





FIG. 16.—WALNUT DAY-BED. Length, 5 feet. Property of E. A. BARRY, Esq.



FIG. 17.—WALNUT DAY-BED. Length, 5 feet; height, 3 feet 7 inches; width, 1 foot 8 inches. Property of C. E. KEMPE, Esq.



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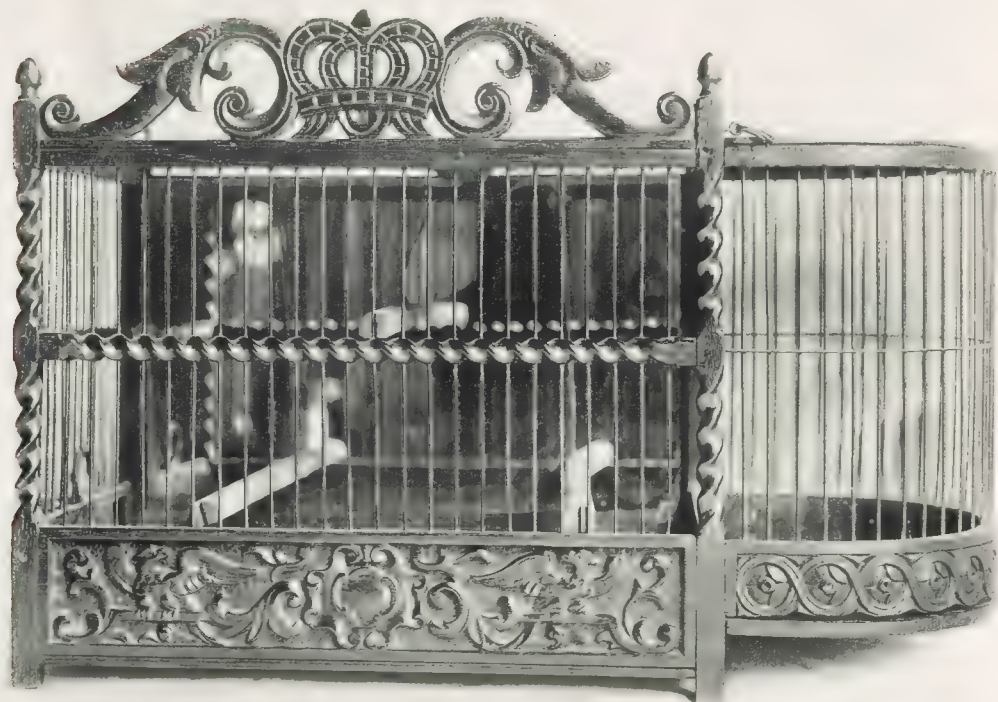


FIG. 18.—OAK BIRD-CAGE. Property of SIR GEORGE DONALDSON.

and the mullions to the glass are a half-rounded moulding of the same wood; the butt-hinges are pinned on the outside of the doors with scalloped gilt bosses; the cornice and plinths are simple and well proportioned in projection; the old handle is missing, but the key-plates are original. The stand resembles early chairs of the time, in the arrangement of the twist and carving of the central leg, though the feet show a later development. One of the original back stretchers is missing.

One of a pair of most interesting cabinets, both from historical association and extreme rarity of design, is given in fig. 20. The cornice is bold and in the strong projection of the time; below this the front opens in two long drawers, fourteen smaller drawers, and a central cup-



FIG 19.—OAK CHINA CUPBOARD. Height, 6 feet 6 inches. Property of the DUKE OF LEEDS.



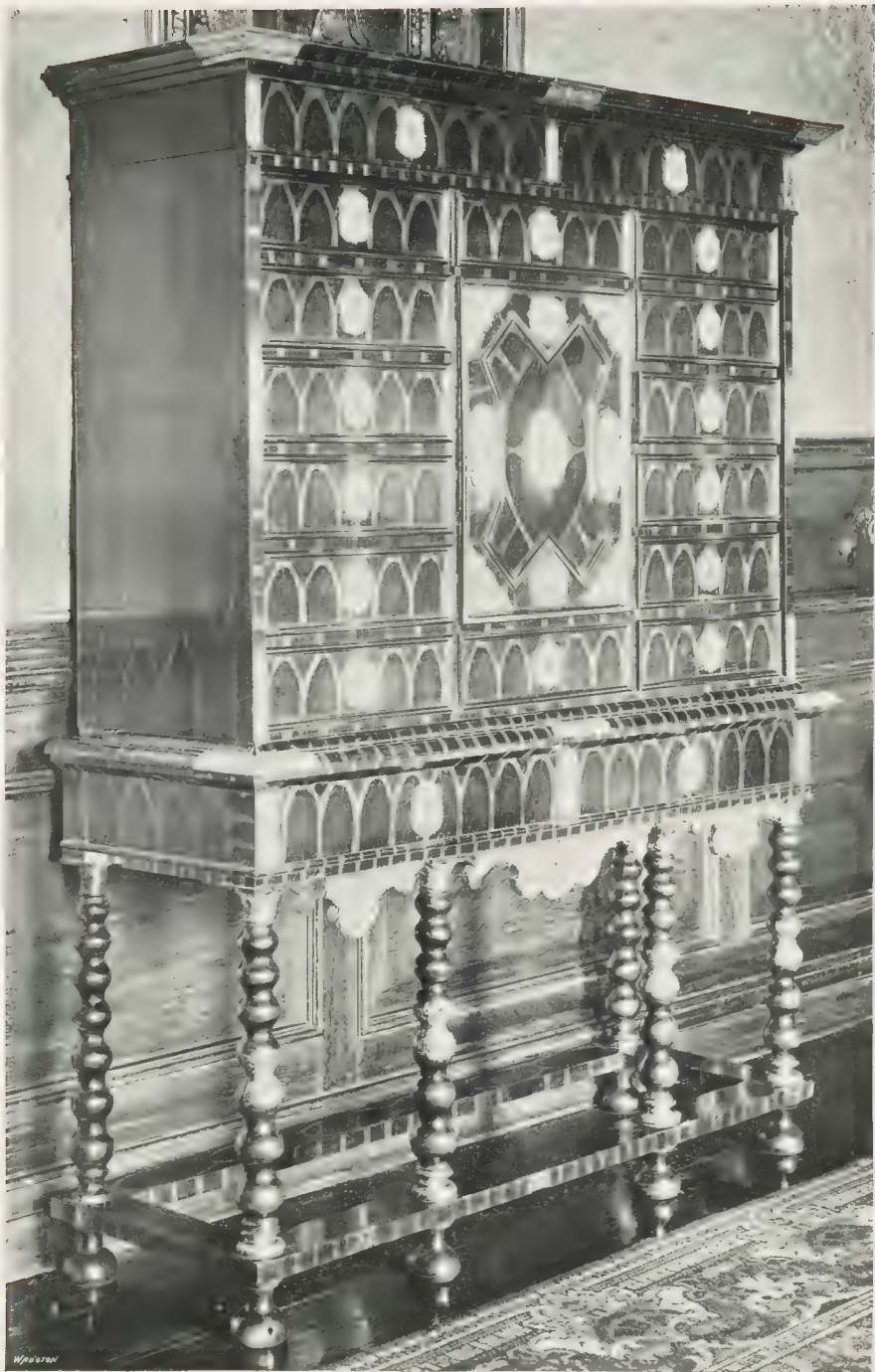


FIG. 20.—WALNUT AND LABURNUM CABINET. Height, 6 feet 7 inches; length, 4 feet 6 inches.  
Property of ROBERT W. J. RUSHBROOKE, Esq.

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board. The whole is faced with laburnum wood, cut from long transverse sections of the tree, the lighter portion of the wood next the bark being retained as an ornament, instead of being trimmed away, as is usual in this sectional veneer. The drawers are bordered with finely run mouldings of walnut, and the door has centre panel mouldings in the same character; on each drawer is an elaborate repousse key-plate of English silver work, and on the centre of the door is a silver monogram composed of the letters H. M. R.—Henrietta · Maria · Regina. The frieze moulding and plinths are clamped at the corners, and also centre, with embossed acanthus. The stand is even more elaborate than the cabinet, and is composed of six legs of ball turning, with embossed silver caps, bases and central neckings of acanthus, supporting a frame which opens in two drawers resembling the cabinet; flat pendants, covered with very fine embossed silver, with the Queen's monogram repeated in the centre, complete the structure. The outer mouldings and flat stretcher are alternately inlaid with the light and dark coloured parts of the wood, the colour of the darker part being a rich olive brown. These remarkable cabinets were once the property of Queen Henrietta Maria, and were given by her, with other things, to her former Master of the Horse and reputed lover, Henry Jermyn, afterwards Earl of St. Albans, who left them to his nephew, and they have remained at Rushbrooke Hall since that time. Jermyn accompanied the Queen during her exile in France. It was he who broke the news of Charles I.'s death to her, and there appears every reason to suppose that she was secretly united to him after this event. On Henrietta Maria's return to this country in 1660 the Parliament made her a large grant, and Somerset House, bestowed upon her as a residence, was decorated and furnished by her with great taste. It is probable that these cabinets formed part of the furniture, during her residence there from 1660 to 1665, and on her leaving this country again she gave them to Jermyn. They correspond in style and workmanship to furniture of about this date, and apart from their remarkable interest in being associated with this turned-down page of history, are most beautiful examples of English silver and cabinet work in combination.





FIG. 21.—UPHOLSTERED BED. Height, 8 feet 6 inches; width, 4 feet 3 inches.  
Property of LORD SACKVILLE.



FIG. 22.—UPHOLSTERED BED. Height, 11 feet; length, 7 feet.  
Property of ROBERT W. J. RUSHBROOKE, Esq.

## CHAPTER II



WAK bedsteads continued to be made during the reign of Charles II., more or less on the old lines, only lighter in form; those remaining from Elizabethan and Jacobean times being still in general use, though the plague and fire account for the destruction of nearly all such specimens in London. State beds and very important beds continued to be made in the upholstered style already described.

Fig. 21, a bed at Knole, associated with the name of Lady Betty Germaine, is a small and simple example of this kind; its original construction is, however, earlier than the hangings. The embroidery of the valances and curtains, in leaves of bold design worked in bright-coloured crewels, has been reapplied on to linen, the original shape of the hangings being preserved; the quilted cream silk linings to the back and valances are in their original state; the quilt and lower valances are composed of old materials. The bed-step at the foot, which has its original caning, is of about the date 1675. A portion of a very fine English Turkey-work carpet of about 1600 is also shown in the illustration. It bears the Curzon arms, and belongs to Mary Curzon, who inherited the carpet from her father and married the 4th Earl of Dorset in 1611. She was governess to the children of Charles I.

A very perfect bed, in untouched condition, is given in Plate II. This was made in the reign of Charles II. for Sir Dudley North, and is still at Glemham Hall, where he lived, and in possession of a member of the same family. The cornice to the tester headed by ostrich plumes, and the four bold mouldings, are covered in crimson velvet of the finest quality, and embroidered on the lower member with a delicate arabesque of flowers in cream-coloured silks; from this hangs a valance



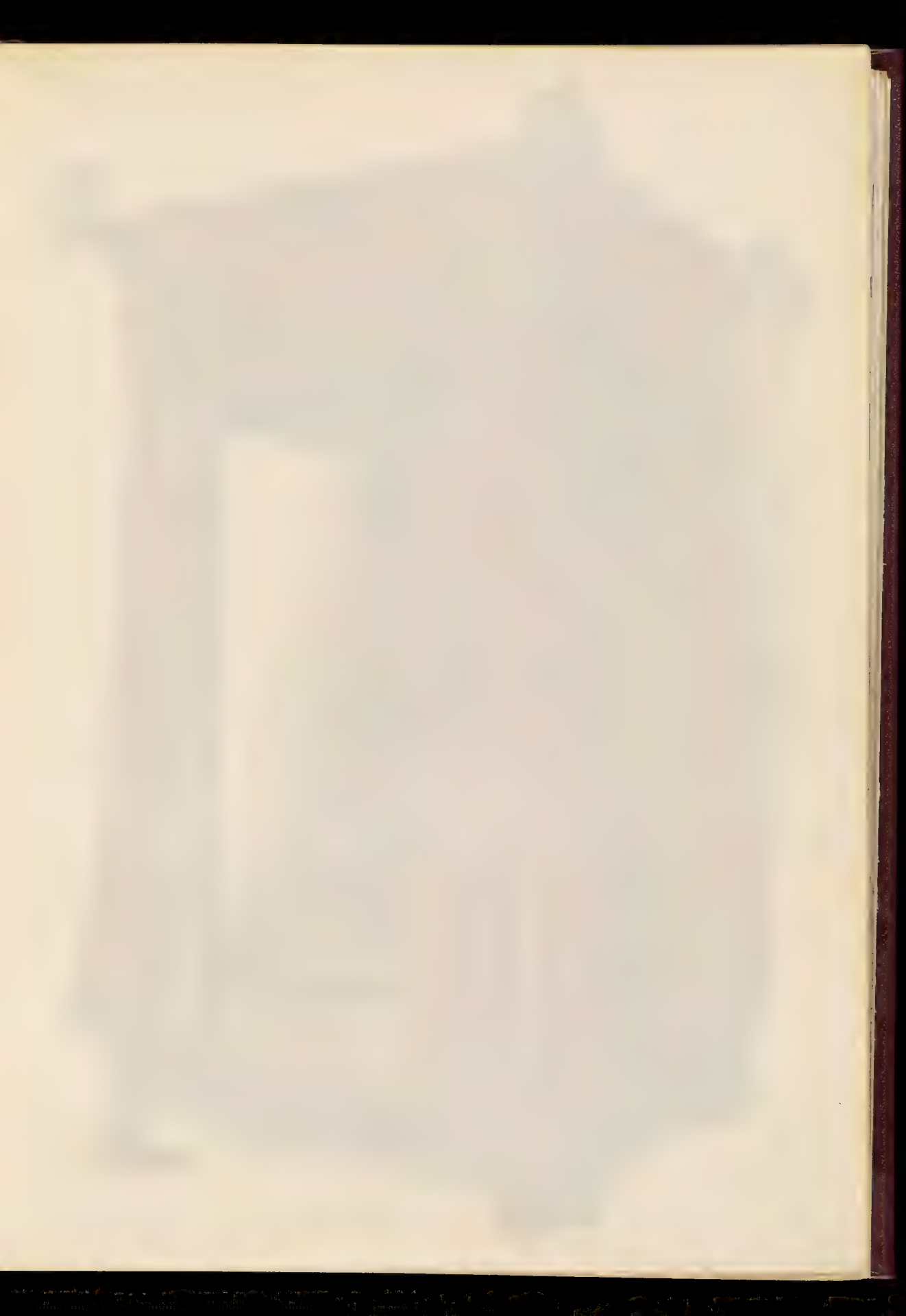




PLATE II (AGE OF WALNUT)

B E D

HEIGHT, 13 FEET 10 INCHES

LENGTH, 7 "

WIDTH, 6 " 9 "

PROPERTY OF

THE HON. CHARLOTTE MARIA LADY NORTH  
AND R. EDEN DICKSON, ESQ.





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of crimson velvet with a deep border of white, buff and silver guipure and embroidery, edged with a thick fringe of brown, cream and tawny tassels; the valance is panelled at the corners with a very highly raised embroidery, the edges being frogged and looped. The ceiling of the tester is of cream embroidered satin, the back being in alternate plain and draped panels of the same, and the early scrolling above the pillows is also covered with the embroidered satin; the quilt matches in material and design. The posts are small and octagonal, and were originally covered with cream satin; the feet finish in removable bases of scrolled design, painted and carved with gilded cherubs. This bed is of about the date 1670, and was slept in by Charles II.

Fig. 22 is another of these state beds, preserved in Rushbrooke Hall, and some few years later in date. Here the cornice to the tester has lost the early simplicity, and is composed of a series of beautiful flat scrolls covered in deep crimson velvet, alternating with large acanthus leaves of embroidered white velvet; the pleated velvet valances are headed, divided, and bordered, with rich fringes of white and canary coloured tassels, the curtains and lower valance being treated in the same way; the ceiling of the tester and the elaborate scrolled and acanthus heading above the pillows are covered with white satin embroidered in a beautiful design, and edged with the white and canary coloured tasselled fringe; the quilt is a brilliant canary colour embroidered with flowers. The feet terminate in open-work scrolls painted black and gold. The whole bed is most rich and yet refined in colour; it is rather smaller than the preceding specimen, and was also slept in by Charles II.

By this time the bedrooms of the nobility were universally furnished with a degree of luxury that up till now had been confined to the few who had been remarkable for lavish expenditure, and the introduction of gorgeously upholstered chairs, cabinets, and other articles of furniture into the bedrooms became general amongst the rich. We read in an extract from a document of the time, that at Kimbolton, in 1675, Robert, third



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FIG. 23.—WALNUT CHAIR.  
Property of the HON. CHARLOTTE MARIA LADY NORTH  
and R. EDEN DICKSON, Esq.

feet. My lady reposed 'in a room hung with six peeces of haire, called silk watered mochaire, the bed hung with mochaire curtaines garnisht with Irish stitch and ffringe and four Irish stitch slips, all lined with white watered tabby, with counterpanes suitable to the bed, kept down by four guilt Lyons' clawes.' The document goes on to

Earl of Manchester, slept beneath an Indian quilted counterpane within yellow damask curtains, while no less than three elbow-chairs of yellow damask had arms open to receive him, and stools of the same bright hue were ready to support his



FIG. 24.—WALNUT ARM-CHAIR.  
Property of S. CAMPBELL CORY, Esq.

## ENGLISH FURNITURE

say that the remainder of the furniture might have found place in the sleeping-chamber of a Queen. In other rooms there was a profusion of all needful furniture, and the little waiting-room near the great hall was hung 'with sadcullor bayes and had one pair of tables, tablemen and boxes, one chess bord and men, and one bord to play at fox and gouse.'

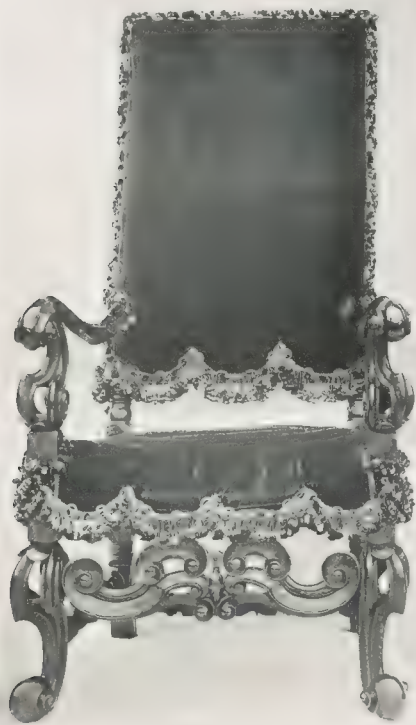


FIG. 25.—WALNUT CHAIR.  
Property of ROBERT W. J. RUSHBROOKE, Esq.

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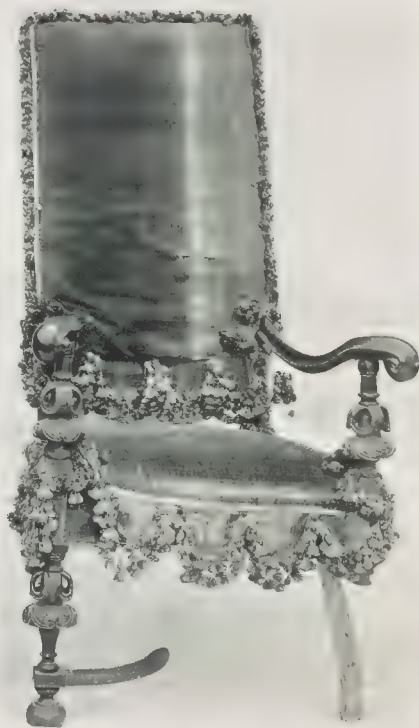


FIG. 26. WALNUT CHAIR.  
Property of ROBERT W. J. RUSHBROOKE, Esq.

The three elbow-chairs of yellow damask, mentioned in the above quotation, would have had the tall padded backs that were now coming into fashion, supplanting those with carved and caned backs. Plate III. is of this type and one of a set of six, made to match the Dudley North bed in Plate II., and formed part of



FIG. 27.—ALCOVE WITH WALNUT CHAIRS—GILT. Height of chairs, 4 feet 5 inches ; width, 2 feet 3 inches. Property of the EARL OF DYSART.







PLATE III (AGE OF WALNUT)  
UPHOLSTERED CHAIR

HEIGHT OF BACK,	3 FEET	11 $\frac{1}{2}$ INCHES	
" OF SEAT,	1 FOOT	6	"
DEPTH	"	7	"
BREADTH	"	2 FEET 2	"

PROPERTY OF  
THE HON. CHARLOTTE MARIA LADY NORTH  
AND R. EDEN DICKSON, ESQ.

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## ENGLISH FURNITURE

the furniture of the state bedroom. The back and seat are upholstered in the identical crimson velvet, and tawny and brown tasselled fringe of the bed. The arms and their supports are scrolled, and the sides of the former are gilt and carved with an egg and tongue moulding, the plain surfaces being painted cream with a delicate pattern of coloured flowers like the rest of the bed; the front legs are of pronounced scroll form, cherub-headed, and finish in scrolled feet also painted and gilt; the stretcher is composed of recumbent angels with trumpets, surrounded by the usual ornamentation of the time. The effect of these chairs and bed, with tall gilt looking-glasses and black Japan cabinets against the tapestry hangings, would be very representative of the best bedroom in a fine country-house at this period.

A plainer and later variety of these chairs is fig. 23. Here the rake of the back is more emphasised, and the arms, front legs, and stretcher are simple, with but little carving; the whole of the wood-work has been painted black and decorated with a delicate flower pattern in gold lacquer; its date is about 1680; it does not possess its original covering. Fig. 24 is a specimen that shows in embryo the side ears that became so popular on easy-chairs during the next century. The back is upholstered, but retains the early cresting, which is composed of two broad flat scrolls surmounted by a ducal crown, carved in a very large but masterly style; below this, on each side, spread the small ears, upholstered only on the inner side, and carved on the outer with a cherub and acanthus; the rake of the back is excessive, and the arms are unusually long; the seat-rail is carved in a waved moulding. Fig. 25 is one of a set of six chairs, made to match the bed (fig. 22). They are covered with the same deep crimson velvet, and the arrangement of fringes corresponds to the valances of the bed; the date of both chairs and bed is between 1680 and 1685, and this is shown by the outward curve to the plain scrolls of the arms and the protuberance of the whorl, in which these and the feet finish. The arm supports and legs are of strong cabriole form, carved in plain mouldings,





FIG. 28. WALNUT ARM-CHAIR. Height, 4 feet 1 inch ; width of seat, 2 feet 1 inch.  
Property of LORD SACKVILLE.

## ENGLISH FURNITURE

and show an interesting evolution from the perforated Chinese leg of this character found on the stands to the lac cabinets imported with so many other Oriental objects at this time.

An interesting ruin, still later in date, also from Rushbrooke, is given in fig. 26. Here the outward curve in the arms is still more pronounced, and the supports and the legs are perpendicular; the double caps, the upper of which are perforated, are strongly Chinese in feeling; the remains of the serpentine stretcher and the ball feet denote the change introduced with the accession of William III. This chair is covered in azure blue velvet, and thickly and gracefully trimmed with a richly tasselled fringe of the same colour.

Fig. 27 represents two chairs at Ham House, about the date 1673, described in an inventory of the time as 'sleeping chairs.' The backs, sides, and seats are padded and covered with satin, which is the colour of a scarlet cherry, figured with gold. The backs have deep sides, and can be tilted to an angle by a steel ratchet; their tops are of engrailed form, and together with the sides and seat are trimmed with a gold fringe fixed on with gilt nails. The arms, which are straight and padded, are supported on a twist, continued in the legs below, finishing in feet formed as sea-horses. The front stretchers are decorated with infant bacchanals finely carved, the other stretchers being plain and bold in their curves; all the wood-work is gilt. Although a great deal of upholstered furniture of this time exists with its original covering, it is generally to be found composed of velvet, for the satins, being more delicate, have perished. The alcove in which these chairs stand is decorated in the taste of 1675, and the piece of tapestry bearing the Duke of Lauderdale's arms is of Mortlake manufacture. These actual chairs were used by the Duke of Lauderdale and Elizabeth Dysart, his second wife, when discussing the schemes of the Cabal. Burnet wrote at the time of Elizabeth Dysart, 'that she was wanting in no methods that could bring her money, which she lavished out in a most profuse vanity, and that she



FIG. 29. —SIXTEENTH- AND SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY FRINGES.  
Property of MESSRS. MORANT.





FIG. 30.—SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY FRINGES.  
Property of MESSRS. MORANT.



## ENGLISH FURNITURE

came to have so much power over the Lord Lauderdale, that it lessened him much in the esteem of all the world.' On the death of his first wife, she married the Duke in 1671; these chairs are about that date, and formed part of the rich furniture that this remarkable woman accumulated round her. The floor of the room, of most elaborate parquet, is interwoven with her initials and those of the Duke, and the walls are covered with the same red and gold figured satin as the chairs, which, according



FIG. 31.—WALNUT TABLE. Height, 2 feet 6 inches; width, 3 feet 1 inch.

## ENGLISH FURNITURE

to the inventory, were re-upholstered, on the occasion of Queen Catherine's visit to Ham House.

Fig. 28 is a chair, similar in type, of about the date 1685. The back and sides are in this case a fixture; it has the original covering of crimson velvet, now much worn, and is richly edged with a silk fringe of cherry and cream coloured tassels; the arm supports and front legs are short, and the scrolling is rich and effective. The knees are carved in low relief in the later style of Charles II., the front stretcher being a rich combination of small C scrolls, centring in a bunch of flowers.

Elaborate and handsome fringes are a very distinctive and characteristic mark in upholstery from the middle of the seventeenth century. Many of these patterns were of foreign importation, and the series on figs. 29 and 30 are illustrations taken from old existing specimens. The earlier fringes of the sixteenth century were straight and simple, with important headings,



FIG. 32.—OAK TABLE. Length, 5 feet 10 inches; height, 2 feet 6 inches.  
Property of Dr. CHARLES EASTWICK FIELD.

## ENGLISH FURNITURE

sometimes elaborately netted. The first tassels introduced hung distinct, and were of twisted silk. In fig. 29, *a*, the straight little fringe of about 1560 has a velvet and knotted edging; *b* is Elizabethan, and of the kind much used on important beds; it is composed of a series of flowers with raised and separate petals, and scrolls in needlework, applied on to a netted ground of silk and gold thread; such a fringe would to-day cost



FIG. 33.—WALNUT TABLE. Height, 2 feet 6 inches; width, 4 feet 4 inches.  
Property of SIR FRANCIS BURDETT, Bart.

## ENGLISH FURNITURE

about £10 a yard to make. Those lettered *c*, *d*, *e*, and *f* are of the beginning of the seventeenth century; in *g* and *h* the netted heading is made of more importance, and is Spanish in type; *i* is a French fringe of about 1630; *k* and *l* are of the middle of the same century, and show the commencement of the floss silk tassels. On fig. 30, *m* is an edging of a flowing design, worked in white silk and silver, on a ground of crimson velvet, whilst *n*, *o*, *p* have headings elaborately corded and netted, and embellished with small round tufts of floss silk; *q*, *r*, *s*, and *t* are fringes of the type found on the furniture of Charles II. and until the end of the seventeenth century.

A large quantity of the silks, velvets, fringes, etc., employed both for furniture and dress, were made in this country. In 1638 a proclamation was issued, stating that if English men and women must buy silk, to buy it of home manufacture. The stuffs mentioned are gold and silver tissues, tuftafaties, plushes, velvets, damasks, wrought grograines, silk mohair, figured satins, etc., and a prohibition was made against making goods of



FIG. 34.—OAK TABLE.

Height, 2 feet 2 inches; length of top, 3 feet 10 inches; width, 2 feet 2 inches.  
Property of T. CHARBONNIER, Esq.



## ENGLISH FURNITURE

silk mixed with cotton. After a list, enumerating the ordinary and more brilliant colours, for which legitimate and permanent dyes could be used, come 'Sadd colors, the following, liver color, De Roy, tawney, purple, French greene, ginger lyne, hare color, deere color, orange and graine color.' In 1681 letters of naturalisation were granted to French Huguenot refugee silk-weavers, and between the years 1670 and 1690, 80,000 people belonging to these textile industries landed in England, and as by 1689, 40,000 families were living by silk-weaving, we may very safely assume that a great part of the fabrics and fringes used in covering the furniture of this period was manufactured in England.



FIG. 35.—WALNUT TABLE. Length, 2 feet 2 inches; height, 2 feet 5 inches; width, 2 feet.

## ENGLISH FURNITURE

About 1668 mention is made by a foreign traveller here of the greater opportunities afforded in this country for conviviality by rounded dining-tables. He no doubt alluded to another and larger version of the flap-table of Jacobean times, introduced now with two flaps, and called a gate-table. Fig. 31, of walnut, is about the time of the great fire; it stands upon eight legs, fine both in turning and proportion. Fig. 32 is of oak, with the stretchers all radiating to the centre, and with somewhat coarser twist, whilst in fig. 33, of about the date 1675, the first subdivision of the table can be noticed, and with the addition of a middle portion or portions, could be converted from a round to an oval table.



FIG. 36.—OAK TABLE. Property of C. E. KEMPE, Esq.



FIG. 37.—LACQUER TABLE. Property of ROBERT W. J. RUSHBROOKE, Esq.

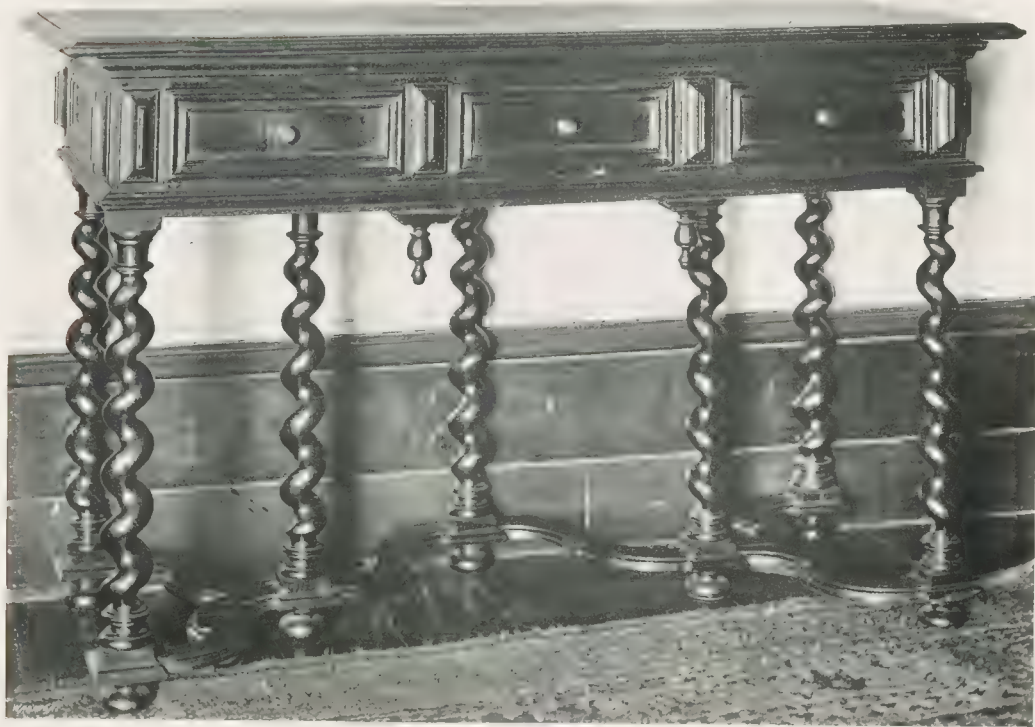


FIG. 38.—WALNUT SIDE-TABLE. Height, 2 feet 10 inches; length, 5 feet 3 inches.  
Property of the REV. J. O. STEVENS.

## ENGLISH FURNITURE

Such a table is mentioned in the travels of Cosmo III., Duke of Tuscany, at a supper he gave in his lodgings to Charles II. in 1669. An extract from the description of the ceremony is given, and it is interesting to note that stools were evidently still the usual form of seat for meals, in this country.

‘The staircase was lighted by torches which were carried before and close to His Majesty, he was preceded by one of his Highnesses’ gentlemen with a candle to the saloon appointed for the supper. From the ceiling was suspended a chandelier of rock cristal with lighted tapers. In the middle of the room the table was set out, being of oval figure, convenient both for seeing and conversing. At the upper end was placed on a carpet a splendid arm-chair, and in front of it by themselves, a knife and fork tastefully disposed for his Majesty, but he ordered the chair to be removed, and a stool without a back, according to the custom of the country, and in all respects similar to those of the rest of the company, to be put in its place. Other guests to the number of 17 were accommodated round the table, and the entertainment was most superb, the supper being served up in 80 magnificent dishes.’

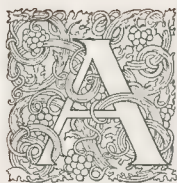
Of the smaller tables, fig. 34 is an early specimen of the gate-table variety, of about 1650; it has six legs, which are fretted out of flat material, the centre legs being mounted on to a broad base and stretcher.

Of small square Carolean tables, fig. 35 is also an early example, about the date 1665; the arrangement of the high stretcher and the long twist is unusual. The single twist table (fig. 36) is of oak, about the date 1675; the flat serpentine stretcher was introduced at this time. Another small table of this period and character is fig. 37. In this the legs, stretcher, top, and sides are painted black, and lacquered with imitation Chinese drawing in the taste of the time. The purposes which called forth so many of these small tables at this period have already been explained.

A small side-table, with panelled front and sides, and a well-moulded capping, is shown in fig. 38. The legs, seven in number, are original in their arrangement, and the serpentine curves of the flat stretcher give charming variety to the base. The introduction of the pendants show that the piece is of quite the end of Charles II.’s reign.



### CHAPTER III



ABOUT 1675, small tables, clocks, and certain other forms of furniture began to be ornamented by marqueterie, and this revived style of decoration is a very distinctive mark in the change of taste. It differed from early marqueterie in the process of construction, the pattern, together with the background, being now laid down as a veneer, and for this reason the shapes of inlaid furniture of this period are frequently sacrificed in order to obtain suitable flat surfaces. It is impossible to state the exact date when this revival of marqueterie began. At first the design of acanthus-leaved arabesques and birds, inlaid in brown and buff coloured woods, was probably inspired by the Italian inlay of the time, whilst that representing flowers and birds in the altogether more realistic manner, produced rather later, was of Dutch inspiration. These two styles amalgamated towards the end of the reign of William; then by degrees the flowers were left out of the design, and the marqueterie became an intricate series of very fine scrolls. The observance of this evolution will be found a certain way of dating these late seventeenth-century pieces.

Fig. 39 is the top of a table, having the usual twisted legs, of about the date 1675. The surface is divided by a broad band of walnut into the Jacobean arrangement of an oval centre and four triangular corners; and this subdivision, with the spaces filled with marqueterie, is found universally continued on table-tops and chests of drawers until the end of the century. In this instance the design is formed of foliated arabesques terminating in flowers, the pattern being of walnut on a ground of light wood; the triangular compartments have sprays of the same design issuing from cornucopia, a very favourite filling to the narrow corners of these panels.



FIG. 39.—TOP OF WALNUT TABLE INLAID WITH MARQUETERIE.  
Property of the VISCOUNTESS WOLSELEY.

## ENGLISH FURNITURE

The birds represented on all this marqueterie are generally of the parrot tribe ; occasionally other birds form the leading motive, with the scrolling starting from their wings or tail. Plate iv. is a chest of drawers decorated in this manner ; the face of the drawers is inlaid with oval panels, an



FIG. 40.—WALNUT INLAID CHEST OF DRAWERS. Height, 3 feet 2 inches ; width, 3 feet 1 inch ; depth, 1 foot 11 inches. Property of J. F. SNOOK, Esq.



## ENGLISH FURNITURE

arrangement found on all these marqueterie chests of drawers ; the birds represent eagles, dark on a light ground. The top of this chest, shown on the same plate, is inlaid with marqueterie of similar design ; the



FIG. 41.—MARQUETERIE CHEST OF DRAWERS. Property of MESSRS. J. MALLETT AND SON.





FIG. 42.—WALNUT INLAID CLOCK.  
Property of the HON. CHARLOTTE MARIA LADY NORTH  
and R. EDEN DICKSON, Esq.



FIG. 43.—WALNUT INLAID CLOCK.  
Property of THE GROCERS' COMPANY.

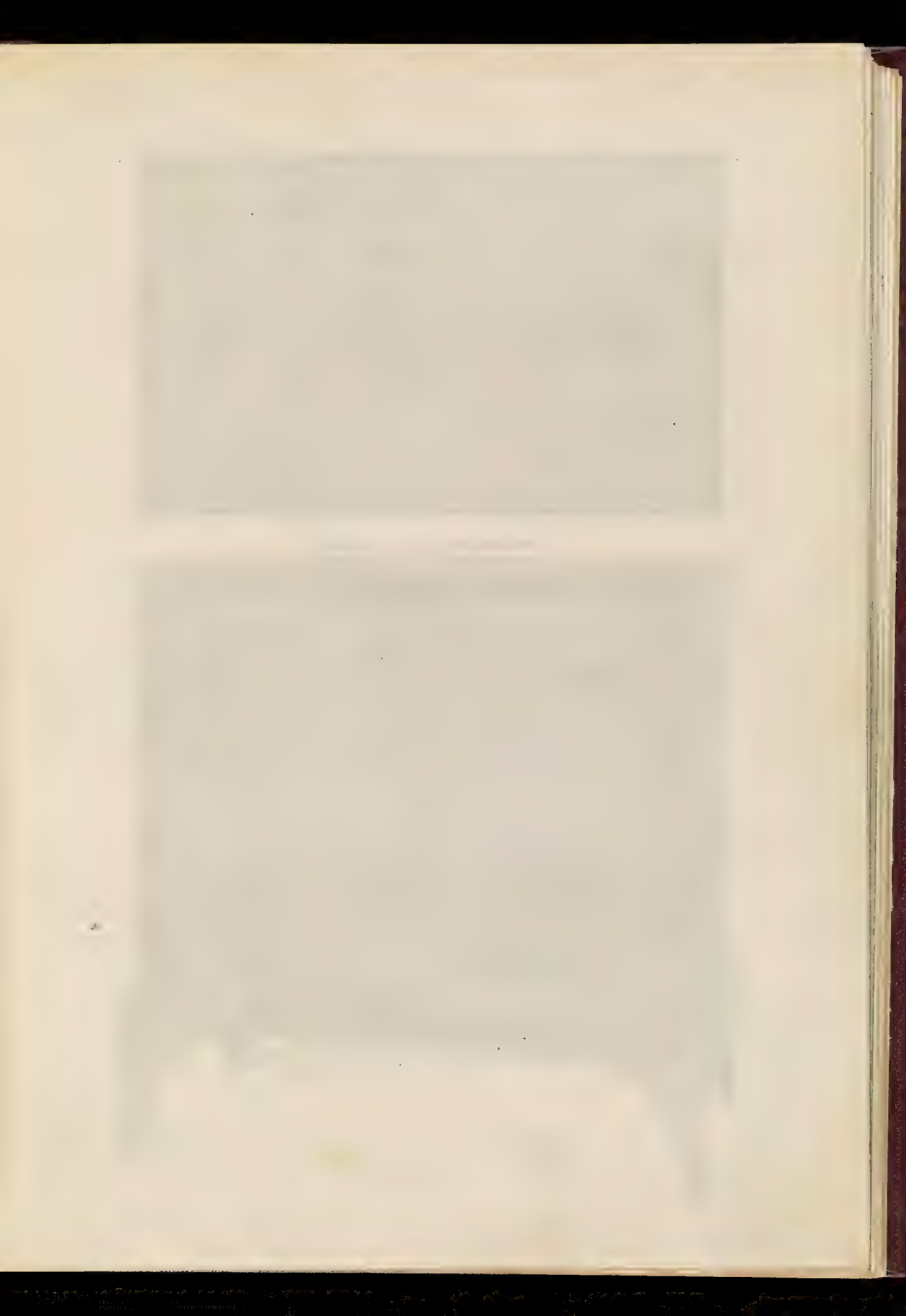


PLATE IV (AGE OF WALNUT)

CHEST OF DRAWERS INLAID WITH MARQUETERIE

LENGTH, 3 FEET 3 INCHES

HEIGHT, 3 " 3 "

DEPTH, 2 " "







## ENGLISH FURNITURE

coarseness of the laurel borders, with the conventional treatment of birds and flowers, point to a date before 1680; the decorated drop-handles, with their rose-shaped plates, are contemporary. The original stand to this piece is missing, and the feet are restorations.

In cutting these marqueterie patterns, the ground was not wasted, and fig. 40 shows a chest of drawers of the same design, and probably by the same hand, as Plate IV., in which the dark wood cut away from the birds, becomes the ground, and *vice versa*. Another example of this early scrolled marqueterie is fig. 41, where an additional charm is given to the flowing lines of the inlay by the employment of other colours besides the brown, buff, and black woods used in the preceding specimens, and an extremely rich effect is produced by the introduction of deep reds and greens amidst the quieter colours. The appreciation of colour in furniture was still further developed in the marqueterie which immediately followed. This consisted of sprays, groups of flowers, and birds, in woods stained to resemble the colour of these objects, with leaves of green-stained bone or ivory; jessamine flowers, in bone and ivory, were also frequently introduced. The clock (fig. 42) made by John Ebsworth about 1678 is an early example of Dutch influence; the flowers are somewhat formal and separate in their arrangement, and the panels containing them are set well apart, more space being devoted to the walnut groundwork than to the inlay. The distribution of this floral marqueterie is a sure index of its date. Another clock (fig. 43), made by Richard Ayres, presented to the Grocers' Company by Phineas Shower, Druggist, in 1683, shows a rather more realistic treatment of the flowers, but the spaces between the panels are still wide; the columns and the bandings are of ebony. This clock case bears the original brass plate engraved with the date of presentation to the Company, and this conclusively settles the period of its inlay.

The cases of these so-called Grandfather clocks originated in a desire to conceal the weights and pendulum of the so-called 'sheep's head and



FIG. 44.—TOP OF MARQUETERIE TABLE. Length, 2 feet 8 inches; width, 1 foot 11 inches.  
Property of PERCY MACQUOID, Esq.





FIG. 45.—TOP OF MARQUETERIE TABLE. Property of SIR GEORGE DONALDSON.



## ENGLISH FURNITURE

pluck' clocks that were fixed on the walls, and made during the first half of the seventeenth century. These clock cases quickly assumed the characteristics of movable and very decorative pieces of furniture. The early specimens were narrow in shape, and more graceful in proportion, than the elaborately decorated, and later forms.

The table-top (fig. 44) is contemporary with the first of these two clocks, and the arrangement of the marqueterie is similar in character. The ground to the inlay is ebony, in which leaves are represented by brilliantly green-stained ivory, and the breasts of the birds and centres of the flowers are stained a deep red; the walnut ground between the panels is cut plain, and the banding of the ovals and corners is narrow; the distribution of design is open throughout, and the legs and stretcher resemble those of the following table. A further step of decoration in this interesting English marqueterie is shown in this table (fig. 45), a little later in date, and of the last years of the reign of Charles II.; the banding between the panels has become broader, in order to accommodate the so-called oyster shells of walnut of which the veneer is composed; these were taken from the boughs, sliced up into transverse sections, and were for many years a favourite feature on English walnut furniture. In this table it will be noticed that the flowers, which are inlaid on ebony, are more elaborate and less conventional, and that the jessamine flower in white ivory is introduced with green leaves of the same material; the other parts are of bleached walnut, and the legs (fig. 46) form an open and early twist centring in a ball, and finish in a serpentine stretcher of the time. This original and intentional bleaching of walnut is also seen on the little chest of drawers and stand (fig. 47); the top is almost identical with the last table, to which it corresponds in date, and the same design is repeated in oval panels on the face of the drawers, the ground being formed of oyster-pieces of walnut. The stand is formed of one long drawer on short twisted legs, and the stretcher is further ornamented by the addition of two heart-shaped panels of inlay.

## ENGLISH FURNITURE

Fig. 48 is another of different design and coarser make. This marqueterie was generally laid down on deal, the drawers being of oak, and the half-rounded walnut mouldings being about a quarter of an inch thick.

It can be easily understood that these brilliant and remarkable tables



FIG. 46.—WALNUT TABLE INLAID WITH MARQUETERIE.  
Property of SIR GEORGE DONALDSON.

## ENGLISH FURNITURE

and chests of drawers called forth a demand for cabinets of the same description, and Plate v. represents one of these on its original stand. The cornice surmounts an ovolo frieze, a universal feature on the cabinets



FIG. 47.—WALNUT AND MARQUETERIE CHEST OF DRAWERS. Length, 3 feet 2 inches ; height, 3 feet 5 inches ; depth, 1 foot 10 inches. Property of MESSRS. J. MALLETT AND SON.



## ENGLISH FURNITURE

at this time ; it lies between two bands of waved inlay, and is faced with walnut oyster-pieces, framing two panels of flowers in coloured woods and green ivory ; the doors beneath are edged with a sand-burnt laurelling (which



FIG. 48.—WALNUT AND MARQUETERIE CHEST OF DRAWERS.  
Property of MESSRS. MORANT.

## ENGLISH FURNITURE

after this date continued to be a favourite design and border in marqueterie), and the oval bands surrounding the centre are veneered with transverse sections of laburnum wood. It can be seen in the other panels that the cornucopia, from which the flowers start, are fringed with the same acanthus introduced in the centre, an indication of the amalgamation of the two styles of marqueterie, floral and acanthus. The inside of these doors are inlaid with macaws, perched on cherry boughs, in deep rich reds and browns, and bordered with narrow bands of sycamore framed in oyster-pieces, which are again edged with walnut veneer cut on the straight. The inner face of the cabinet opens in ten drawers decorated like the frieze, and a cupboard, which again opens on a further compartment filled with four drawers, enclosing still further a small secret drawer; the macaws are repeated on the sides of the cabinet. The stand is headed by two drawers, supported on five legs gracefully twisted, resting upon a curved stretcher, the square blocks that serve as feet being the only portion of the cabinet not in its original condition. In this piece, every advantage has been taken of the different colours and cuttings afforded by walnut, and its preservation is so perfect, that the colour and general appearance can have altered but little since it was made.

Judged by the standard of cultivated taste, isolated specimens of this Charles II. furniture may at first sight seem somewhat gaudy, but elaborated notes in decoration have always been introduced as a setting, when clothes without pattern were in fashion; the employment of brilliant damasks and velvets upon the walls also demanded vivacity in the accompanying furniture, and this variety must have been well thought out as a background for the occupants of these rooms. The King himself almost invariably wore black when indoors, and nearly every portrait of this time represents the red-lipped and ringleted beauties of the Court dressed in brilliant-coloured satins. The flowered tabby dresses, which Pepys mentions as so becoming to his wife, were evidently somewhat of an exception, and perhaps only for out-of-door wear. This affectation of





PLATE V (AGE OF WALNUT)

WALNUT CABINET INLAID WITH MARQUETERIE

HEIGHT, 5 FEET 7 INCHES

DEPTH, 1 FOOT  $8\frac{1}{2}$  "

BREADTH, 3 FEET  $7\frac{1}{2}$  "

THE PROPERTY OF

THE HON. CHARLOTTE MARIA LADY NORTH  
AND R. EDEN DICKSON, Esq.







## ENGLISH FURNITURE



FIG. 49.—WALNUT AND MARQUETERIE CABINET. Property of H. MARTIN GIBBS, Esq.

simplicity in dress was carried into the ruffles, which at this time were composed only of fine lawn ; but simplicity was confined to such details, all else that surrounded these people was ornate ; even the tall Charles II. wall panels, that now seem so plain, were in those days either painted with landscapes, mythological subjects, or in imitation of coloured marbles. Celia Fiennes mentions in her diary that at Wilton—

‘There is a drawing roome and antiroome, ye wanscote is painted with ye whole History of ye Acadia romance made by Sir Philip Sidney.’ Also, ‘There are three or four dining roomes and drawing roomes of state with very good bed-chambers and well furnished ; damaske and tissue.’

About Burghley she writes :—

‘My Ldy’s Closet is very ffine, the wanscote of the best Jappan, the cushions very rich work, there is a chamber My Lady used to Lye in, in the winter, a green velvet bed and the hangings are all Embroydery of her Mother’s work very ffine.’



## ENGLISH FURNITURE

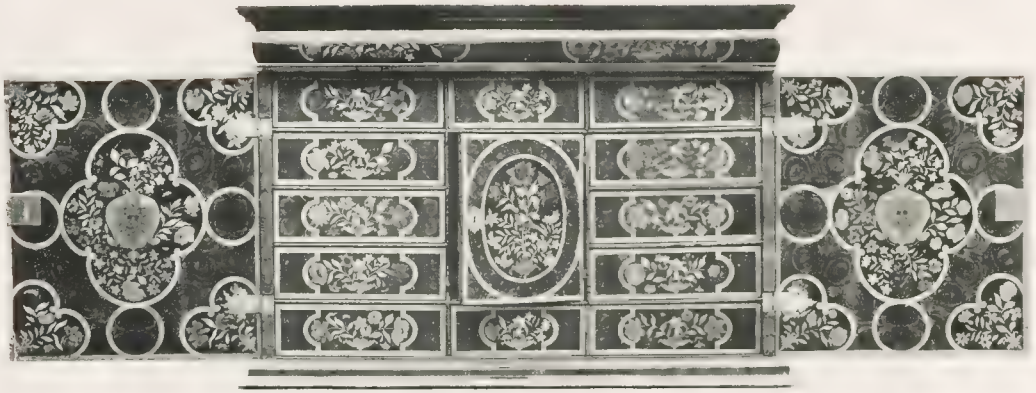


FIG. 50.—THE SAME CABINET, OPEN. Property of H. MARTIN GIBBS, Esq.

At Agnes Burton she mentions—

‘A very good little parlour with plain wainscote painted in veines like marble, dark and white streakes.’

Some rooms, however, continued to be wainscoted with different coloured woods, or carved with elaborate festoons of birds, fruit, and flowers in the manner of Gibbon and his pupils, and when at Lord Orford’s at Newmarket, this same enterprising young lady remarks, that—

‘The Hall is wainscoted with wall nut tree—the pannells and Rims round with mulberry tree, yt is a Lemon Coullour and ye mouldings beyond it round are of a sweete outlandish wood not much differing from Cedar but of a finer graine, the Chaires are all the same. The whole house is finely furnish’d with differing coulld Damaske and velvets, some ffigured and others plaine, at least 6 or 7 Richly made up after a new mode. In ye best drawing roome was a very Rich hanging, gold and silver and a little scarlet, mostly tissue and brocade of gold and silver and border of green damaske round it; ye window curtain ye same greene round it and doore curtains.’

‘The sweet outlandish wood ’ she refers to would probably have been yew.

Of another part of this same house she writes :—

‘The roomes were all well wainscoted and hung, and there was ye finest Carved wood in fruitages, herbages, gumms, beasts, fowles, etc., very thinn and fine, all in white wood without paint or varnish ; there was a great flower pott Gilt Each side of the Chimney in the dineing Roome for to sett trees in. There is very fine China and silver things and irons and jars and perfume potts of silver.’

## ENGLISH FURNITURE

Celia Fiennes took several tours on horseback through England in William and Mary's reign, and her impressions of the later forms of decoration and furniture of Charles's time are most interesting and reliable.

In addition to all these decorations on the walls, quantities of portraits, fresh and bright in colour, were painted at this time, so that all these brilliant methods formed a varied background, which it is necessary to realise before attempting to criticise the taste of floral marqueterie.

In the cabinet (fig. 49), which is about the date of the accession of William III., the jessamine forms a prominent detail in the design; the bandings and edgings of the green ivory leaves are foliated as in Plate v. In the centre of the doors, acanthus in brown and yellow woods is introduced round a rather elaborate vase; the insides of the doors centre in lion masks. This cabinet originally stood upon a chest of drawers of similar workmanship, or a stand with twisted legs, which is now missing. The jessamine flower and green bone leaves are again very apparent in the chest of drawers (fig. 51), of which the stand is also missing; but in fig. 52 a quieter form of this same marqueterie is shown, where the jessamine flower is introduced, but in buff wood, the other woods used being browns and blacks. The stand to this, which is probably a few years later than the chest, is a very early example of the cabriole leg. This quiet form of bird and floral inlay, with the foreign influence still visible, ran contemporaneously with the highly coloured varieties. The cabinet (fig. 53) evidently formed part of the same suite of furniture as the last chest of drawers, and both were made about 1690; the marqueterie shows very clearly the union and predominance of acanthus over the varied flowers of the previous years; the form also marks an innovation in construction—that of a writing cabinet supported on a chest of drawers. The frieze, of ovolo shape, is inlaid with the usual two panels, and below this a large and heavy flap of oak veneered with walnut and marqueterie lets down, disclosing a series of eleven inlaid

## ENGLISH FURNITURE

drawers, a cupboard and eight pigeon-holes; the design on the flap consists of one large and four small corner panels, so that when closed, as in fig. 54, the design is carried out into the drawers beneath; the sides are also decorated with large inlaid panels. The internal structure is



FIG. 51.—WALNUT AND MARQUETERIE CHEST OF DRAWERS.  
Property of C. E. KEMPE, Esq.





FIG. 52.—WALNUT AND MARQUETERIE CHEST OF DRAWERS.  
Property of the DUKE OF BEAUFORT.





FIG. 53.—WALNUT AND MARQUETERIE WRITING CABINET. Height, 4 feet 4 inches ; width, 3 feet 6 inches ; depth, 1 foot 6 inches. Property of the DUKE OF BEAUFORT.



FIG. 54. SAME CABINET, CLOSED. Property of the DUKE OF BEAUFORT.

## ENGLISH FURNITURE



FIG. 55. WALNUT AND MARQUETERIE LACE BOX. 2 feet by 1 foot 6 inches.  
Property of MESSRS. J. MALLETT AND SON.

entirely of oak, and the handles and key-plates have the cherubims' heads, that were introduced about 1690. It is rare to find this exact form of furniture decorated with English floral marqueterie.

A lace box, given in fig. 55, is of the same type and period. The inside is divided into compartments lined with pink silk, and the lid is fitted with a glass. Many of these boxes were made at this time, and they much resemble each other, except in the character of the veneer; they were usually made to match the chests of drawers on which they were intended to stand.

Fig. 56 is a cabinet with doors and inner drawers of similar construction to fig. 49, but possesses its original stand in the shape of a chest of drawers. The open distribution of the marqueterie infers a date of about 1687; the colour is subdued in tone, the leaves being composed of wood stained an olive green, and the artificial bleaching of the walnut bands gives great variety to the quiet shades of fawn employed in the veneer. Macaws, similar to those found on Plate v., are introduced on the inside of the doors; the design of the marqueterie throughout is attractive, simple, and not overcrowded in its long flowing lines. The





FIG. 56.—WALNUT AND MARQUETERIE CABINET.  
Height, 5 feet 9 inches; width, 3 feet 11 inches. Property of W. S. CURTIS, Esq.

## ENGLISH FURNITURE



FIG. 57.—TOP OF SAME CABINET, OPEN. Property of W. S. CURTIS, Esq.

bun-feet are contemporary with the piece. Fig. 57 is the upper portion with the doors open.

In the very elaborate cabinet faced with ebony (fig. 58) it will be noticed the marqueterie design has become closer and more involved, and that the flowers form a border to the central panels of the doors on which butterflies are represented in addition to the usual birds; a broad edging of black and yellow marqueterie frames the whole piece; this ornamental edging was introduced from Holland about 1695. The design on the inside of the cabinet (fig. 59) closely resembles those already given, and the leaves throughout are represented in the green ivory; the sides of the little central cupboard are also inlaid, and finish at the back in three drawers. This cabinet bears the strongest foreign influence, but the joinery, etc., are of English workmanship.

The question naturally arises, How far does this foreign influence go, and what are the distinguishing features between English and foreign marqueterie? Much of the English work has erroneously been ascribed to the latter manufacture, and it is a very usual way out of the difficulty

## ENGLISH FURNITURE

to assign uncommon specimens that cannot easily be classed to foreign sources. A little deliberation will show that importation on a scale large enough to supply all that is supposed to have come from abroad at the date of manufacture would have been difficult and expensive, and impossible during times of war. A very large number of English cabinet-makers and artisans existed by the manufacture of high-class furniture, and these numbers were continually supplemented by talented French craftsmen, who sought the protection of this country against the religious intolerance

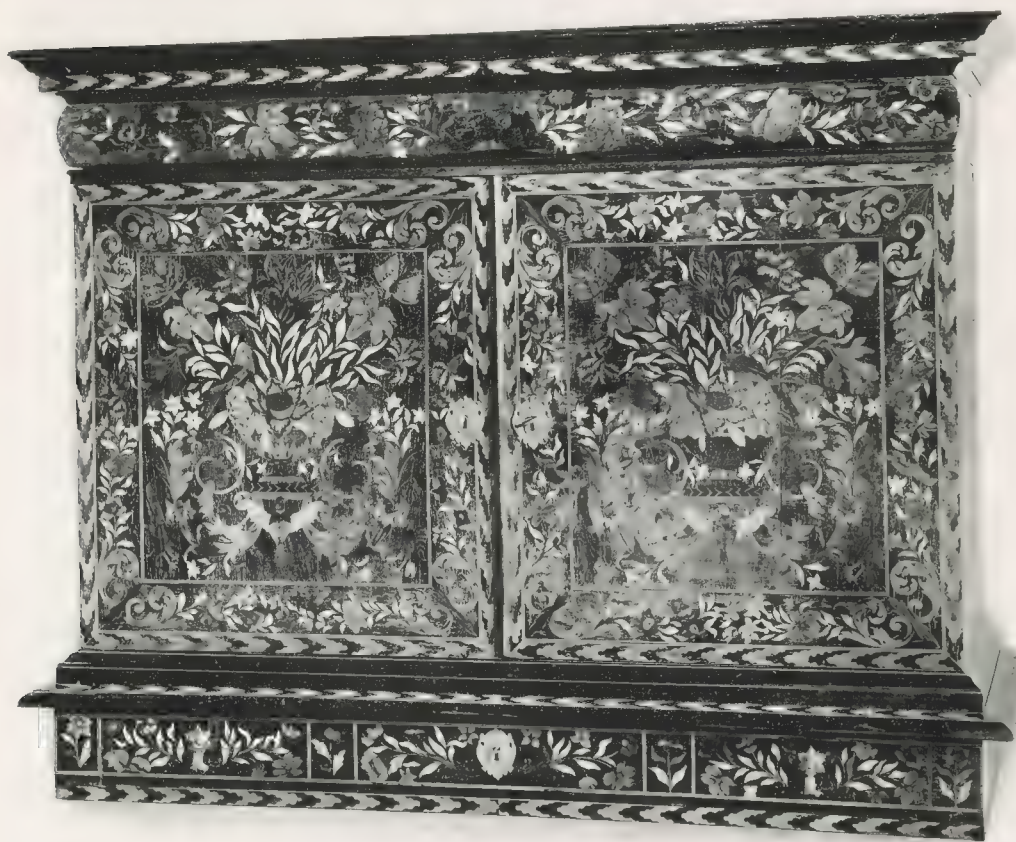


FIG. 5b. — EBONY AND MARQUETERIE CABINET. Height, 4 feet; length, 3 feet 1 inch.  
Property of the EARL OF DYSART.



## ENGLISH FURNITURE

of their own, and who, whilst working in conjunction with the Englishman, could not help asserting their own individual taste.

In foreign marqueterie a curved surface on the furniture is of frequent occurrence, and the general tone is that of a strong colour on a black or dark ground; or lightly stained flowers with the leaves of green-stained wood on a red-brown walnut ground; the inlay of light colour on a light sycamore ground was seldom attempted. In the drawing of the acanthus or endive pattern, the points to the leaves are blunt, as opposed to sharper points found on English work, the sprays more complicated, and the 'shadowing' on these and the flowers is in Dutch, French, and Italian marqueterie far more elaborate; the borders are also more often of black-stained wood, and the birds represented are in stronger action than in English specimens, and although in the latter, cherubs and sphinx forms are occasionally represented, the introduction of figures, as on the specimen (fig. 56), is rare. A great difference lies also in the dovetailing and joinery of the internal workmanship, and in the different cutting of the veneers.



FIG 59.—SAME CABINET, OPEN. Property of the EARL OF DYSART.

## CHAPTER IV



It has been already shown that the stool was a very useful and important piece of furniture in former reigns, and even as late as William III. the usual seat for meals. In Charles II.'s reign many elaborate and upholstered stools were introduced for the sitting-rooms; and some of these in their original condition are in existence. In the ante-rooms and passages of the palaces, these upholstered stools quickly took the place of the chests and coffer, hitherto used as seats, but in the drawing-rooms and presence-chamber of the Court itself, they served a different purpose, for their use there implied distinction; this custom had been gradually introduced from the Court of Versailles, where the right to use a 'tabouret' in the presence-chamber was permitted to no one of lower rank than a duchess, and was the greatest honour that could be bestowed upon a Frenchwoman by Louis XIV. Even in ordinary households, the use of a chair was by no means yet extended to the younger members of a family. Sometimes stools were made in sets of six or more; at Hampton Court Palace, and in some of the very large houses, these sets are to be found in their original condition.

Fig. 60 is a long seat of stool form made to match the tall cane-backed chairs of 1670 and originally cane-seated to carry a squab; in this instance the seat has been re-upholstered in needlework of the time; the C scrolling of the legs is so pronounced that the corners are placed angleways as in the chair (fig. 13). The number of seats on occasions must still have been limited even at this date, and we can only presume were moved with the families to their different residences. Pepys gives an account of an important entertainment at the Duke of York's, on which



FIG. 60.—WALNUT SEAT. Property of Sir George Donaldson.



FIG. 61.—WALNUT SEAT. Length, 4 feet 4 inches; depth, 1 foot 6 inches; height, 1 foot 10 inches. Property of the Duke of Devonshire.



## ENGLISH FURNITURE

occasion the furniture was evidently elsewhere. He writes on March 4, 1669 :—

‘ And so walked to Deptford, and there to the Treasurers house where the Duke of York is, and his Duchess, and there we find them at dinner in the great room, unhung ; and there was with them my Lady Duchess of Monmouth, the Countess of Falmouth, Castlemayne, Henrietta Hide, and my Lady Peterborough. And after dinner Sir Jer. Smith and I were invited down to dinner with some of the maids of honor. Having dined and very merry, etc. . . . and so we up ; and there I did find the Duke of York and Duchess, with all the great ladies, sitting upon a carpet, on the ground, there being no chairs, playing at “ I love my love with an A, because he is so and so, and I hate him with an A, because of this and that ” ; and some of them, but particularly the Duchess herself, and my Lady Castlemayne were very witty.’

Pepys, however, in his Diary makes but little mention of furniture in detail, and in two instances only does he name a price for what he bought. On July 1, 1661, he writes :—

‘ This morning I went up and down into the city to buy several things, as I have lately done for my house ; among other things, a fair chest of drawers for my own chamber, and an Indian gown for myself, the first cost me 33s., and the other 34s.’



In April 1666, he grumbles at having to pay ‘ near £40 for a set of chairs and couch.’

Fig. 61 is a stool from a set at Hardwick, of about the date 1678. The frame is plain save for isolated spaces of carving in low relief, and similar to that employed on the frames of portraits at this time ; the squab is original and upholstered in crimson velvet now much worn. The legs, terminating in octagonal bun-feet, are more marked in their

FIG. 62.—WALNUT STOOL. Height, 1 foot 10 inches.  
Property of the DUKE OF DEVONSHIRE.

## ENGLISH FURNITURE

scroll than the illustration infers, but become straight towards the feet, a fashion that was now suggesting itself; the stretcher, bold and original, rises towards the centre, and in the coarse C scrolls the dolphin origin is clearly observable. Fig. 62 is one of a set of smaller stools of similar design but of more uncommon shape, being round; some traces of silver embroidery still remain on the original squab.

Fig. 63, long and short stools of elaborate workmanship and of about the date 1680, form part of another set also at Hardwick; the fronts of both are richly decorated with very elaborate carving, in which the flat scrolls are almost concealed by curled acanthus and representations of roses and other flowers strongly suggestive of Gibbon, or Gibbons, as he was afterwards called. The legs are also wreathed with flowers, the whole of the wood-work has been gilt in the eighteenth century, and the seats have been re-upholstered. Fig. 64 shows a long stool at Hampton Court



FIG. 63.—WALNUT SEAT AND STOOL, GILT. Seat—length, 6 feet; height, 1 foot 6 inches; depth, 1 foot 10 inches. Stool—length, 2 feet 6 inches; height, 1 foot 6 inches.

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Palace, of which there are several, forming part of the suite to the bed used by Queen Anne. The form of these stools is, however, earlier than this bed, and they were probably re-upholstered about the date of Anne's accession. The small carved stool in the same illustration is of the end of the reign of Charles II., and is covered with the same velvet; both these stools would have been trimmed with tasselled fringes, now replaced by gimp of much later date.

After 1680, it will be observed that the stretchers to stools are serpentine and often centre in a turned finial. Fig. 65 is a specimen of small size from Hampton Court Palace, with the original covering of cherry-coloured damask and tasselled fringe, looped at the corners and centres in the style of late Charles II. The legs have an inward scroll ending in perpendicular feet, and the stretcher rises up to a central finial. Fig. 66 is a few years later in date, about 1690, with the original covering of yellow and green velvet of English manufacture; the border of the frame is carved in low relief and gilt; the legs, square in form, are decorated in a similar manner, the groundwork being painted black. The introduction of black and gold paint on walnut furniture was adopted at this



FIG. 64.—WALNUT SEAT AND STOOL. HAMPTON COURT PALACE.



## ENGLISH FURNITURE



FIG. 65. WALNUT STOOL. HAMPTON COURT PALACE.

time, in order to harmonise with the cabinets and tables of lacquer-work that were now becoming fashionable. The majority of walnut furniture was, however, left in the natural colour of the wood, and fig. 67 is a stool from Hardwick of about 1690, simple and beautiful in design, and in the taste which was by that time slowly growing more restrained and classical. The frame of this stool is cornered and centred with bold acanthus; the caps to the square legs, which gradate rapidly towards the feet, are carved with the same effective nulling found upon the contemporary silver plate; the stretcher is delicate and centres in a tall finial; the covering to the seat is of red velvet, now almost perished, with a centre band of highly raised silver embroidery. Fig. 68 represents a stool made during the first years of William III.'s reign; in this instance there is no carving, but a great charm is conveyed by accuracy of proportion, and well-considered facets of the wood that reflect the light; it has been re-upholstered.

Walnut settees of late Cromwellian and early Re-



FIG. 66.—WALNUT STOOL. Property of the DUKE OF LEEDS.

## ENGLISH FURNITURE

storation type are rare ; they resemble the simple turned chairs of the period. Fig. 69 is a specimen of about 1658 made in walnut, the stretchers and front legs being turned in ball and ring fashion similar to the stand of the Henrietta Maria cabinet (fig. 20). It has been re-upholstered. In its original state it would have been covered with either Turkey-work or leather.



FIG. 67.—WALNUT STOOL.  
Property of the DUKE OF DEVONSHIRE.

The settees and chairs of the latter part of the seventeenth century were evidently constructed with a view of forming backgrounds to the prevailing fashions in costume ; the strongest characteristics at this time being an extremely high-backed seat to suit the voluminous periwigs and tall head-dresses of the women. Fig. 70 resembles two tall upholstered



FIG. 68.—WALNUT STOOL. Property of FRANK GREEN, Esq.

chairs joined in one, on the principle of the smaller double chair or love-seat, the back being conspicuously higher than the sitter's head. The legs and stretchers, composed of simple scrolls, repeat the details of the chairs of 1675, with which this settee is contemporary ; the covering is a white, green, and blue Genoa velvet of eighteenth-century design, but in

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recovering this interesting piece of furniture the cushion has been made much higher than in its original state. Another of these rare settees of double-chair shape is fig. 71, of about the date 1685; this introduces upholstered wings and arms of outward and scrolled form; the front stretcher is composed of bold scrolls, parti-gilt; the legs are perpendicular, with peg-top shoulders; the damask, with which the seat is covered, is not contemporary with the piece, and the squab is missing; it was originally covered with a purple and white Genoa velvet, but the fringe and galon trimming are all that now remain of this upholstery.

Plate VI. is a double-backed settee of unusual form. The headings of the back resemble chairs of the date 1690; it is from a set at Hornby Castle. The wings of this settee finish on the outside in spiral whorls, and the arms roll over as in the example from Penshurst, finishing below

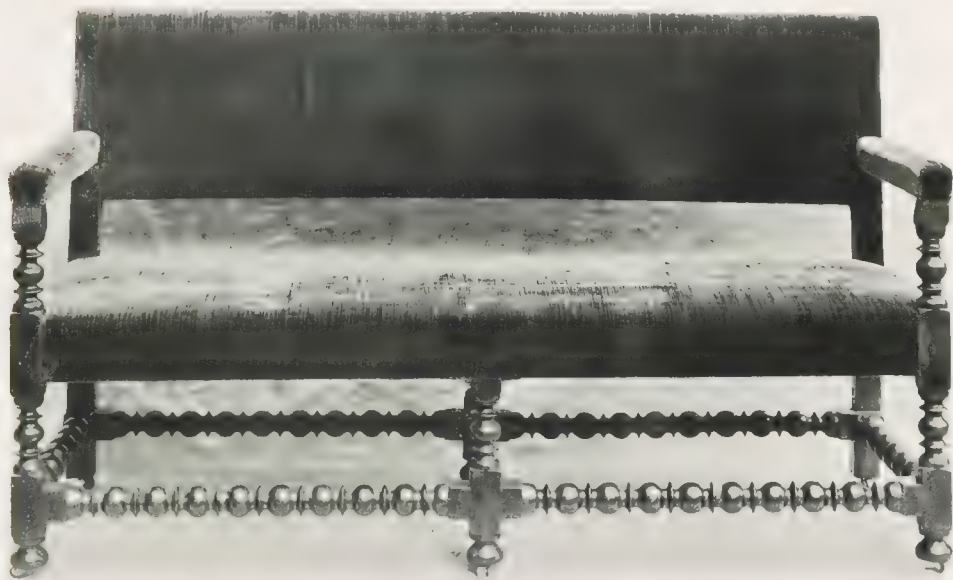


FIG. 69.—WALNUT SETTEE. Length, 6 feet. Property of J. FRANCIS SNOOK, Esq.



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in an outward and forward scroll ; the wood-work is painted black, the carved ornament being gilt ; it has the original covering of rich Genoa velvet of blue, black, and brown on a cream ground, the divided squab being a usual adjunct at that time. This very scarce piece of furniture is in its original condition, the two side cushions only are missing. Such



FIG. 70.—WALNUT UPHOLSTERED SETTEE. Length, 4 feet 2 inches ; height, 3 feet 9 inches.  
Property of LORD SACKVILLE.

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cushions are shown in fig. 72, a settee not quite so elaborate in form. The stretcher, which is missing, would have been of serpentine form, centring in a finial, and the design will be seen on a chair given later belonging to the same suite: all are covered with contemporary green and yellow velvet of English make, the edges being trimmed with a broad yellow braid in a picturesque and effective manner. After 1675 many innovations were introduced into the form of the couch, and eventually they were made long enough to lie down on, at full length, and so in time superseded the day-bed. Fig. 73 is a long settee or couch



FIG. 71.—WALNUT UPHOLSTERED SETTEE. Property of LORD DE LISLE AND DUDLEY.

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with five cushions, of about the date 1695; the back is headed by three crestings of decorated pediments, each centring in a ducal crown over an escutcheon bearing the cipher of the first Duke of Leeds, the date of the creation being 1694. The day-bed (fig. 74) is of the same style and make. These two couches have been vaguely assigned to French manufacture, but the carpentry, carving, painting, and gilding are distinctly English, and, moreover, in 1694, the approximate date of these two settees, we were at war with France. The only part of doubtful origin is the



FIG. 72.—WALNUT UPHOLSTERED SETTEE. Property of the DUKE OF LEEDS.



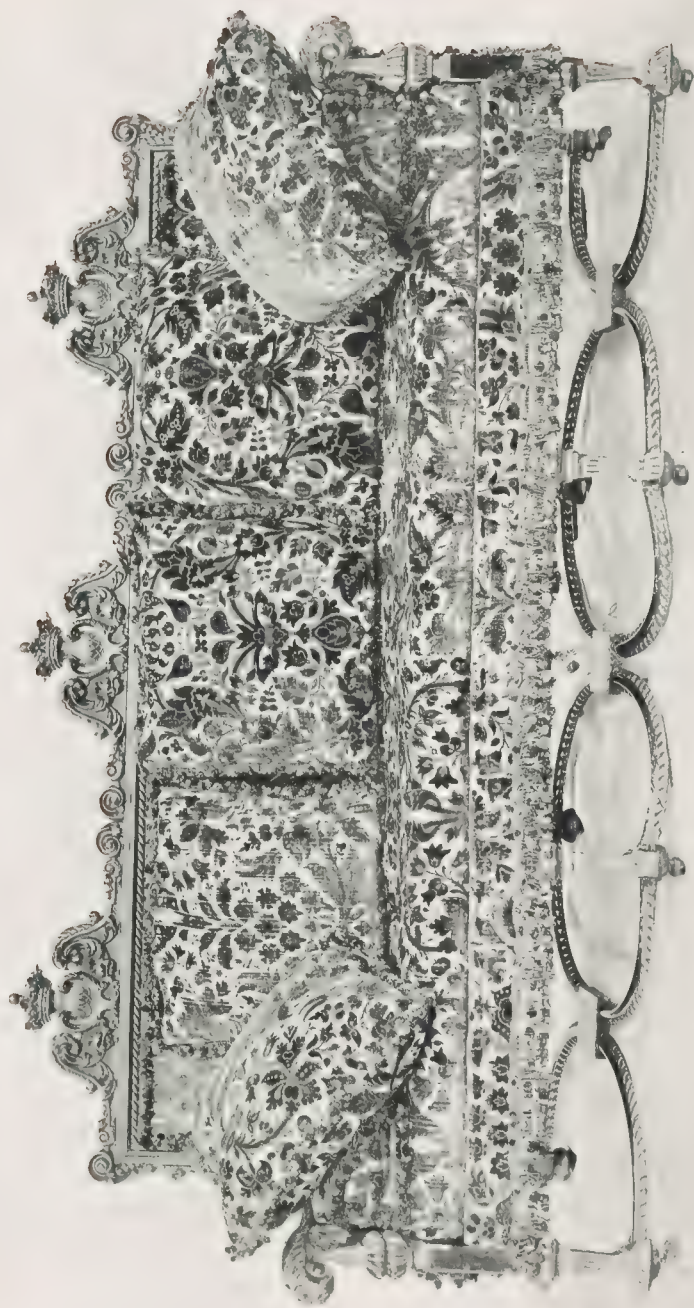


FIG. 73.—WALNUT UPHOLSTERED SETTEE. Property of the Duke of Leeds.

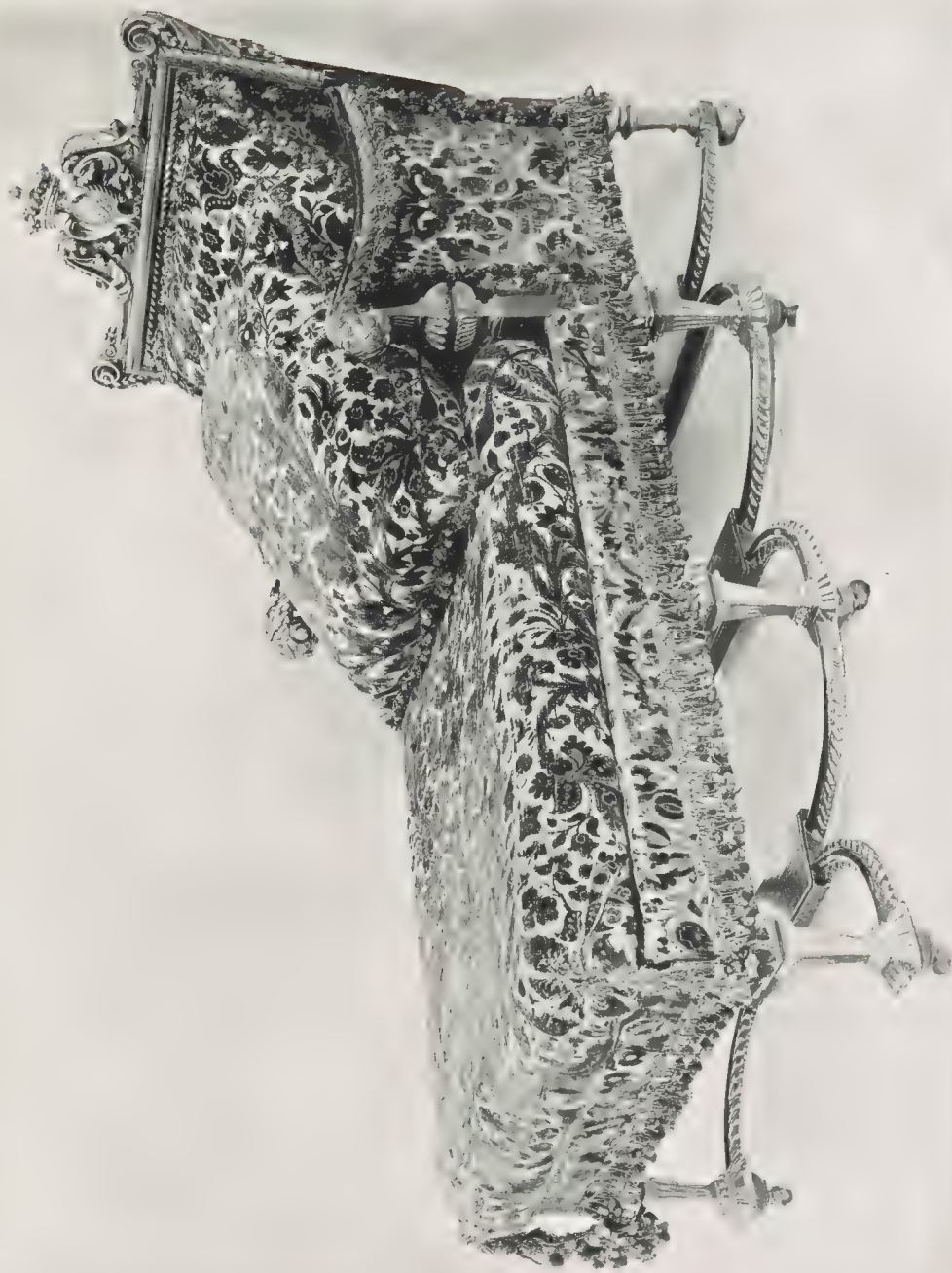


FIG. 74 —WALNUT UPHOLSTERED DAY-BED. Property of the Duke of Leeds.



FIG. 75.—WALNUT UPHOLSTERED DAY-BED. Length, 5 feet; height, 2 feet.  
Property of Lord De Lisle and Dudley.



## ENGLISH FURNITURE

velvet, and though unusually unobtrusive in pattern for foreign manufacture of that time, it is probably Italian. It will be interesting to compare the details in the stool from Hardwick (fig. 67) with these two pieces from Hornby. The wood-work in both couch and day-bed is carved in a well-proportioned nulling gilt on a black ground; the arms, which finish in scrolls, being further ornamented with floral tracery; the legs taper, and are quadrangular, united at the base by a horizontal series of oval stretchers; the bun-feet supporting these have been cut to receive casters; in their original state they would have had the proportion of the legs on the Hardwick stool and chair (the latter to be given later), which are untouched. The long squabs are supported on a foundation of cords and sacking; they are entirely covered with the velvet, which is of superb quality, small and refined in design; the colours are crimson, green, and cinnamon on a dark cream satin ground, and edged with an irregular and deeply tasselled fringe. These two couches represent remarkable examples of luxury in the upholstered furniture of this time.

Fig. 75 is another beautiful day-bed, but of earlier date, for the legs, with their inward scroll and waved stretcher, prove a time towards the end of the reign of Charles II.—about 1680. The back rolls over and is headed by a shell carved in walnut wood and covered in rose damask and velvet; the frame of the seat and back is sharply carved in floral tracery, thickly gilt; curved valances of rose damask, strained on wood, and finishing in tassels, are inserted between the legs; the squab, back, and cushion are of rose damask covered with an appliqué of yellow, green, and cream-coloured silk, and trimmed with a yellow galon with little green tufts. The legs and stretchers are thickly gilt, and the former resembles the type on the seat from Hardwick (fig. 61). This day-bed has been described in the guide-books to Penshurst as of Tudor interest, but its charm is enhanced by the assignment of a proper date that enables one to realise its correct surroundings.

The surroundings of this time were of a nature that have never been

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repeated in this country, luxury and pleasure predominating over everything. The bedrooms and ante-chambers of Mazarin, Castlemaine, and Portsmouth were amongst the sights of London; but although the often described silver bed of Nell Gwyn represented an unaccountable extravagance, her other immediate surroundings appear to have been in reason. This witty and talented actress really cared for Charles, and was the only favourite liked, or tolerated, by the nation. Castlemaine was a rapacious termagant, who, during one period of eight months, abstracted over forty thousand pounds from him. Louise de Keroualle, Duchess of Portsmouth, equally avaricious and acquisitive, under the guise of tender affection, sold Charles to the French King, and was in consequence most hated of all the favourites, while the £60,000 a year that Charles II. received from Louis XIV. was very rapidly dissipated on the extravagant furnishing of the various apartments of these stars of the Court. Evelyn, in his Diary, 10th September 1675, states:—

‘I was casually showed the Duchess of Portsmouth’s splendid apartment at Whitehall, luxuriously furnished, and with ten times the richness and glory beyond the Queen’s, such massy pieces of plate, whole tables, and stands of incredible value.’

Eight years later he again calls attention to the profusion with which this woman furnished her rooms:—

‘Following his Majesty this morning through the Gallery, I went with the few who attended him, into the Duchess of Portsmouth’s dressing-room within her bed-chamber, where she was in her morning loose garment, her maids combing her, newly out of bed, his Majesty and the gallants standing about her; but that which engaged my curiosity was the rich and splendid furniture of this woman’s apartment, now twice or thrice pulled down and rebuilt to satisfy her prodigal and expensive pleasures. Here I saw the new fabric of French tapestry, for design, tenderness of work and incomparable imitation of the best paintings, far beyond anything I had ever beheld. Some pieces had Versailles, St. Germain, and other palaces of the French King, with hunting, figures and landscapes, exotic fowls, and all to the life rarely done. Then for Japan cabinets, skreens, pendule clocks, great vases of wrought plate, tables, stands, chimney-furniture, sconces, branches, braseras, etc., all of massy silver and out of number, besides some of her Majesty’s best paintings.’





PLATE VI (AGE OF WALNUT)

SETTEE

HEIGHT OF BACK, 4 FEET 8 $\frac{1}{2}$  INCHES

„ OF SEAT, 1 FOOT 7 „

LENGTH, 5 FEET 8 „

THE PROPERTY OF

THE DUKE OF LEEDS







## ENGLISH FURNITURE

There are a few bills in existence referring to the household and furnishing expenses of Nell Gwyn during the years 1674, 1675, and 1676. These include charges for a bedstead with silver ornaments, great looking-glasses, dress furniture, and lavish clothes. The bedstead is described as covered with representations of the King's head, slaves, eagles, crowns, and cupids, and Jacob Hall, the tight-rope dancer, all in silver embossed work. The account for this is dated 1674, and headed: 'Work done for ye righte HONble Madame Guinne, John Cooq̃us, silversmyth his bill.' The King's head weighed 197 oz., and the rest of the ornaments 2168 oz., and cost in those days £906, so that by the time the elaborate hangings and fringes were added, the bed would have represented a very vast sum of money.

The custom of using silver tables, mirrors, and furniture decorated with applied work in silver was by no means confined to these ladies of the Court. After her visit to Bradby, the Earl of Chesterfield's, Miss Celia Fiennes writes in an interesting manner in connection with one of these silver bedrooms, as follows :—

'Ye drawing Roome had Company in it, ye Earle having just marry'd his Eldest daughter Lady Mary to one Mr. Cooke a Gentleman of a good Estate hard by, so there was Company to wishe her joy ; but I was in severall bed Chambres, one had a Crimson damaske bed, ye other Crimson velvet set upon halfe paces: this best was ye bride Chamber wch used to be Call'd ye silver roome where ye stands, table, and fire utensills were all massy silver, but when plaite was in nomination to pay a tax, ye Earle of Chesterfield sold it all and ye plaite of ye house, so that when ye table was spread I saw only spoones, salts and forks and ye side board plaite, noe plaites or dishes and but few salvers.'

The tax she alludes to was that of William III. in 1696 and 1697, when plate was called in at five shillings and fourpence per ounce. Great quantities of Charles II. silver furniture was no doubt melted on this appeal to the country, and the higher standard, represented by the hall-mark of Britannia, etc., was substituted for the lion passant and leopard's head, which had hitherto stood for the sterling value.



FIG. 76.—TOP OF SILVER TABLE. Property of Lord Sackville.





FIG. 77.—SET OF SILVER FURNITURE. Property of LORD SACKVILLE.



## ENGLISH FURNITURE

At Windsor there is a table and two guéridons covered with silver, embossed and chased, of which there are very good electrotypes in the Victoria and Albert Museum. The top of the table bears the royal crown and cipher of the King; the legs are of silver resembling the wooden turned twist of the time. It bears the London hall-mark of 1680.

The stands or guéridons were for lights, or the large silver and china potpourri jars, that were used so much in the decoration of the finely furnished rooms of the time. There is another of these silver tables at Knole, of the date 1680, two guéridons to match, and a large mirror, all in embossed silver. Fig. 76 is the top of this table, in which the central oval design represents the musical contest between Apollo and Marsyas, and is set in a border composed of swags of garrya bloom and bunches of fruit; the table-top is further decorated with fine acanthus scrolls of chased and embossed work, starting from cherub's torsos, whilst at the four corners are the superimposed cipher and coronet of the Earl of Dorset. The frame is embossed in a frieze of single acanthus leaves inverted, similar to what is found upon the porringers and cups of 1680, and finishes in a deep pendant with cherubs holding an Earl's coronet over the Dorset cipher. The legs scroll in the manner recently introduced in small tables of the time, and rest upon claw- and bun-feet. The guéridons at the side are of similar workmanship, and support two large perfume pots. The glass above is most elaborate in its work, repeating the design found upon the table; at each side are one branch sconces of silver. The table bears the London hall-mark of 1680.

The illustration (fig. 77) of this set of silver furniture preserved at Knole gives a good idea of the extravagance of the time. The reflection in the mirror shows the bed prepared for James I., and the dwarf on the tapestry behind the left-hand sconce is a portrait of Geoffrey Hudson, his Court dwarf.

Fig. 78 shows a set of fire-irons, bellows, and brush, also decorated with silver in the manner of 1680. The handles, shovel, and legs of the



FIG. 78.—SET OF SILVER-MOUNTED FIRE-IRONS. Property of the EARL OF DYSART.

2 : M

## ENGLISH FURNITURE

tongs are of iron, capped and clasped with silver knops, terminating in acanthus husks ; on the bellows is the cipher of the Duke of Lauderdale, with ducal coronet and feather mantling. The little lion is one of a pair, that form the rests to the fire-irons. The feet of the fire-pan (fig. 79) are splayed, and terminate in broad flanges of acanthus. There are many sets of these beautiful silver grates and fire-irons in Ham House, all of about the same date.

Tables and cabinets, during the latter part of the seventeenth century, were often decorated with applied corners and centres of this embossed English silver work, but in consequence of the thinness of the silver, the metal has loosened from its fastening, and so but few perfect specimens remain. A table-top, decorated with silver in this manner, is fig. 8c,

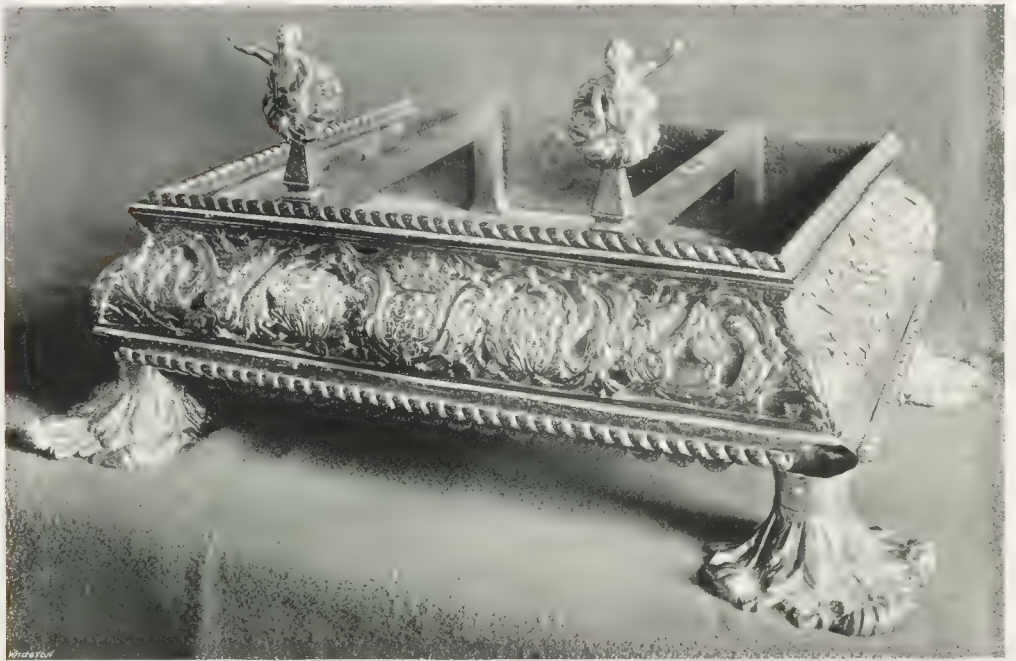


FIG. 79. SILVER FIRE-PAN. 1 foot 8 inches by 1 foot 4 inches. Property of the EARL OF DYSART.



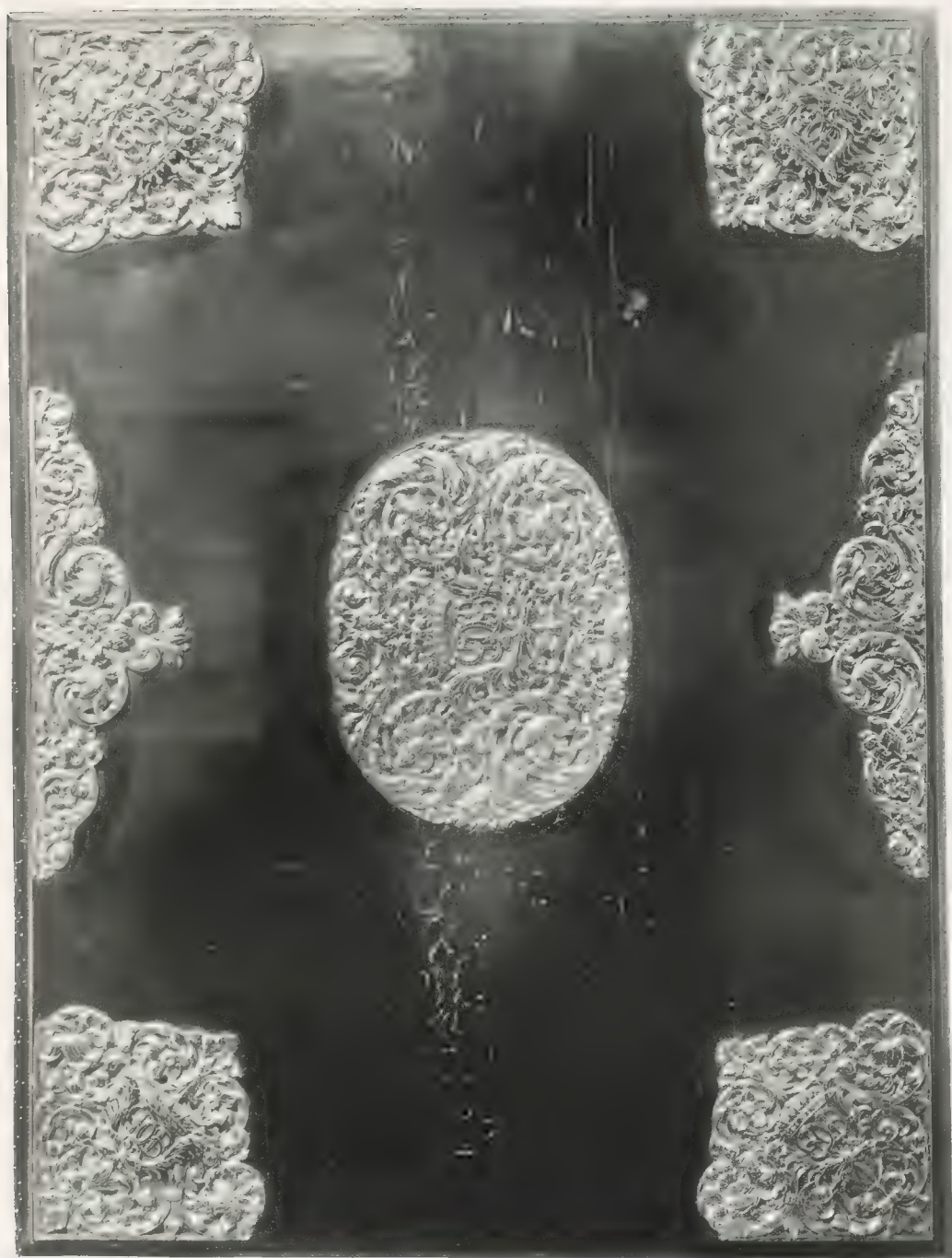


FIG. 85. EBONY TABLE-TOP MOUNTED IN SILVER.  
Length, 2 feet; inches; width, 1 foot 11 inches. Property of the EARL OF DYSART.

## ENGLISH FURNITURE

made for Elizabeth Dysart about 1680, and whose cipher is applied on the open silver-work of the decoration. The frame (fig. 81) is ogeed, and both this and the top are of ebony; they are supported by four graceful female terminal figures, finishing in lion claw-feet, connected by scroll-work interwoven by laurel garlands. The admirable carving of these figures, which are of walnut, suggests the work of Gibbon or one of



FIG. 81.—WALNUT LEGS OF SAME TABLE. Height, 2 feet 5 inches.  
Property of the EARL OF DYSART.

## ENGLISH FURNITURE

his pupils. The stretcher is plain, and the blocks supporting the feet are additions. The ebony of the top is supposed to be earlier than the rest of the table.

Fig. 82 is a walnut table of similar form from the same collection, and presumably a copy of the preceding specimen, made a few years later; the figures are deficient both in life and style; the walnut top is bordered with a herring-bone inlay of the same wood.

Another highly finished table of this kind, made of maple-wood, is shown in fig. 83. The top is inlaid with a fine strap-work in silver lines. The half-round moulding of the edge is carved with the bold acanthus of 1680. The frame is plain and veneered with the knotted portions of the maple, opening in a drawer, which has the original drop-handles. This frame is supported on small cushions that cap four finely carved female



FIG. 82.—WALNUT TABLE. Property of the EARL OF DYSART.



## ENGLISH FURNITURE

heads ; the legs below these are of double C scrolled form ; the stretcher is serpentine, with a central finial carved as a lamp and flame ; the feet are flattened and scrolled ; the whole of the carving is thickly gilt, the plain parts being left in the natural colour of the wood. The same idea is seen on the walnut table (fig. 84), of about the same date. The heads of the scrolled legs are delicately carved in the pattern of chairs and stools of this time, and the stretcher and feet correspond ; the top is edged with a waved border not often found on English furniture.

The individual touch of Grinling Gibbon is clearly seen on the table (fig. 85), his mastery of movement being shown in the portrayal of the



FIG. 83.—MAPLE-WOOD TABLE. Length, 3 feet 10 inches ; height, 2 feet 7 inches ; width, 2 feet 6 inches. Property of the DUKE OF DEVONSHIRE.



FIG. 84.—WALNUT TABLE. Height, 2 feet 5 inches ; length, 2 feet 5 inches ; width, 2 feet 2 inches.  
Property of S. CAMPBELL CORY, Esq.



FIG. 85.—LIME-WOOD TABLE. Length, 2 feet 9 inches ; width, 1 foot 6 inches ;  
height, 2 feet 5 inches. Property of SEYMOUR LUCAS, Esq.



FIG. 87. GILT MIRROR. Property of the MARQUIS OF EXETER.



FIG. 86. CARVED LIME-WOOD MIRROR. Property of RANDOLPH BERENS, Esq.



## ENGLISH FURNITURE

cherubims' active expression in combination with their beauty; the delicate irregularity of their pinions, the subtle and lifelike manner in which the wreaths of flowers are introduced, all denote the work of a very great artist. Few pieces of Gibbon's statuary and furniture remain, but his architectural decorations in wood-carving claim for this untutored genius the highest place in this craft.

Gibbon was practically discovered by Evelyn, who wrote of him on 18th January 1671 as follows:—

'This day, I first acquainted his Majesty with that incomparable young man, Gibbon, whom I had lately met with in an obscure place by a mere accident, as I was walking near a poor solitary thatched house in a field in our parish near Sayes Court. I found him shut in; but looking in at the window I perceived him carving that large cartoon or crucifix of Tintoretto. I asked him if I might enter; he opened the door civilly to me, and I saw him about such a work as for the curiosity of handling drawing and studious exactness, I had never before seen in all my travels. I questioned him why he worked in such an obscure and lonesome place; he told me it was that he might apply himself to his profession without interruption, and wondered not a little how I had found him out. I asked if he was unwilling to be made known to some great man, for that I believed it might turn to his profit; he answered, he was yet but a beginner, and would not be sorry to sell off that piece; on demanding the price, he said £100. In good earnest, the very frame was worth the money, there being nothing in nature so tender and delicate as the flowers and festoons about it, and yet the work was very strong, etc.'

As a proof of Gibbon's obscure origin and want of education, the subjoined letter, written by him to Evelyn in 1682, is also given:—

'Honred

'Sr I wold beg the faver wen you see Sr Joseff Williams again you wold be pleased to speack to him that hee wold get mee to Carve his Ladis sons hous my Lord Kildare for I onderstand it will be verry considerabell ar If you haen Acquaintans wich my Lord to speack to him his sealf and I shall for Ev're be obliaged to You I wold speack to Sir Josef my sealf but I knouw it would do better from you.

'Sr youre Most umbell

'Sarvant

'G. GIBBON.'

The English wood-carving of the eighteenth century owes its technical excellence of execution to the schools of Gibbon and Cibber,

## ENGLISH FURNITURE



FIG. 88.—LACQUER MIRROR. Property of MESSRS. ISAACS.

for until their time but little in the shape of realism in decoration had been attempted, and however widely Gibbon's followers drifted from his original methods and school of design, it was to the influence of these carvers in Charles II.'s and William's reigns that English wood-carving eventually rivalled that of foreign countries.

## ENGLISH FURNITURE

Fig. 86 is a frame to a mirror carved by Gibbon ; the open tracery and delicate detail of the flowers and fruit are a good example of his early style.

The gilt frame of the mirror (fig. 87) is of the school of Cibber, and of about the date 1680. The carving represents an elaborate and open-work acanthus scroll intermingled with flowers ; the top heading is formed of two very finely carved figures of cherubs supporting an earl's coronet ; the cherubs are repeated on the base, but here they lack the style of those on the heading. The plain half-round moulding that holds the glass is of black lacquer, with gold and coloured flowers.

What may be termed 'freaks' in the shape of mirrors occur frequently at this time. Some are bordered with panels of needlework representing biblical or historical subjects, some framed in borders of bead-work, others with the ornaments made of thin cardboard, papier-mâché, and shells. Fig. 88 is one of the latter description of about 1688. The frame is of black and gold lacquer, the divisions of which are filled with representations of baskets of flowers ; the top panel, crested with carved and gilt flowers, contains the frontage of a small house with figures at the windows. The details of this 'conceit,' as it was called at the time, is composed of small rolls of stiff paper set edgeways and gilt, and the work representing flowers is most delicate and remarkable ; at the bottom is a grotto composed of little shells. This piece is very representative of the childish taste indulged in occasionally by the ladies of fashion at that time. Other favourite forms of mirrors were those framed in a broad half-round of walnut in strong projection ; these kind of frames were often inlaid with marqueterie ; they were chiefly used in bedrooms, and matched in design the chests of drawers and lace boxes over which they were hung.

Fig. 89 is a mirror evidently made by the same hand as the chest of drawers, Plate IV., for the colour of the woods employed and the pattern of the marqueterie are the same. The frame to this class of mirror has frequently a flat heading of scalloped or hooded form, sometimes fretted ;





FIG. 89.—MARQUETERIE MIRROR.

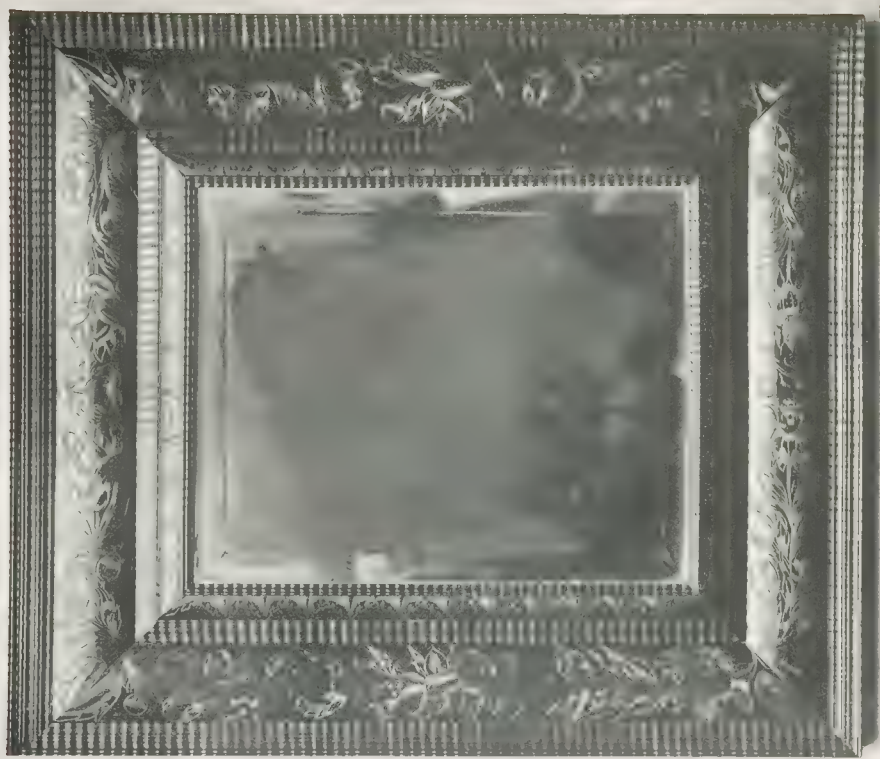


FIG. 90.—EBONY MIRROR. Property of Messrs. ISAAC.

## ENGLISH FURNITURE

in this instance eagles under a crown are introduced as a cresting. Occasionally the green-stained ivory leaves and jessamine of the cabinets are also added.

Fig. 90 is an ebony mirror, and a specimen of English furniture that obtained some favour here after the Restoration. The originals of this ebony furniture were introduced by Catherine of Braganza; they included settees and chairs, and were a very favourite form of royal gift with Charles II. The source of this ebony furniture was Goa, and a certain amount was copied in this country from the Indo-Portuguese importations. The outlined carving of the flowers on this frame corresponds with that found on English plate of the time.

## CHAPTER V



LOOKING-GLASS of every description was much esteemed for the purposes of decoration and furnishing towards the end of Charles's reign, in the form of mirrors, and let into the wall as panels. In a contemporary description of the dining-room at Chatsworth, the distribution of looking-glass reads almost early Victorian in its arrangement.

'At the end of the dineing roome is a large door all of Looking glasse in great pannells all diamond Cutt. This opposite to ye doores that runs into ye drawing roome and bed chamber and Closet so it shows ye roomes to Look all double. Ye Dutchess's Closet is wanscoated with ye hollow burnt japan, and at Each corner are peers of Looking glass. In all ye windows ye Squares of glass are so large and good they cost ros. a pannell.'

These window-panes would have been bevelled, like those still in existence at Hampton Court Palace, which measure about 14 by 10 inches.

## ENGLISH FURNITURE

Elaborate bathrooms were at this time frequently introduced into the large houses. Mention is made in the same letter of a bathing-room at Chatsworth.

‘Ye walls all with blew and white marble—the pavement mixed, one stone white, another black, another of ye Red Vaned marble. The bath is one Entire marble all white finely veined with blew and is made smooth, it was as deep as ones middle on the outside, and you went down steps into ye bath big enough for two people. At ye upper end are two Cocks to let in one hott, ye other Cold water to attemper it as persons please—the windows are all private glass.’

The windows of the gallery in Whitehall were all glazed with bevelled glass. This was ‘the glorious gallery’ that Evelyn alludes to, as furnished with such inexpressible luxury, and where he witnessed that last Sunday evening of Charles II., surrounded by his mistresses and dissolute courtiers. The next day the King had an apoplectic fit, and his death, which took place five days after, stemmed for a time the tide of profligacy; and the sense of extravagance and profusion, that had existed for thirty-six years, was replaced by the quieter Courts and influences of James II. and William III.

With this attempt at improvement in the morals of society, a certain element of picturesqueness disappeared, and the furniture soon became more sedate and practical. The caprices of a Court have always been to some extent responsible for the evolution of taste in furniture, and it will be noticed that change of a distinct kind in any of the applied arts can often be attributed to political associations. William III. was Dutch on his father’s side, and his preferences and manners were distinctly those of that nation; while the importations from Holland that he encouraged produced a more orderly and neater style of furniture, that eventually developed into simplicity and elegance.

The immediate surroundings of William’s Court were gorgeous, for much existing in the previous reigns was retained; and although the new style of furniture tended towards simplicity, the decorations and materials employed were still sumptuous; the marqueterie introduced on furniture



## ENGLISH FURNITURE

became quieter, more colourless, and the chairs less decorated, and more dependent upon graceful curves. It will be necessary in dealing with this large area, comprising so many different classes of furniture, to resume individual evolutions at the point where they were dropped, and introduce, in their proper place, pieces belonging to a former reign. In Miss Fiennes' description of some of the rooms at Windsor, written about 1698, it is evident that much of the furniture belonging to the Court of Charles II. was still retained and valued for its interest and beauty.

'I went up staires into a Large dineing roome, Damaske Chaires and window Curtaines, wanscoated, and severall fine pictures. The Rooffe of this was well painted also, but they are soe Lofty its enough to Breake ones neck to Looke on them. Thence into ye Drawing roome where is the large Branch of silver, silver table, and stands, and Glass frames and Chaire frames. Next is ye Queenes Chamber of state. Here's a silver table, and stands, and Glass fframe. Thence into ye King's dressing roome almost all Glass; ye windows of all ye roomes are Large sashes as big as a good Looking glass and are all diamond Cut round the Edges. Thence into the kings Constant bed chamber, being one of yr halfe bedsteads of Crimson and Green damaske, jnside and outside the same hangings, and Chaires and window Curtaines the same; it was Lofty and full with good ffringe; here was tables, stands, Glass frames Gilt gold fine Carving etc. etc. Next this is the drawing roome of state, the Cannopy and throne and ye part behind is all green velvet Richly Embroyder'd with silver and Gold, of high embossed work, and some Curiously wrought Like needlework that you can scarce see ye Ground or stuff its wrought on, and the Crown of Crimson velvet Embroyder'd just over the Chaire or throne of state. The Cannopy was so rich and Curled up and in some places soe full it looked very Glorious, and was newly made to give audience of the Ffrench Embassadour to shew ye Grandeur and magnificence of the British Monarch—some of these ffoolerys are requisite sometymes to Create admiration and regard to keep up the state of a kingdom and nation.'

Windsor had always surpassed Whitehall in magnificence, and after the fire of 1698, when the latter palace, which had consisted of over a thousand furnished apartments, was, with the exception of the Banqueting-hall, utterly consumed, Windsor remained the royal residence for furniture and decoration, Hampton Court Palace being incomplete, and Kensington Palace being on a much smaller scale.

It is difficult to exhaust the many varieties of chair made during the latter part of Charles II.'s reign, in which scroll-form was the leading

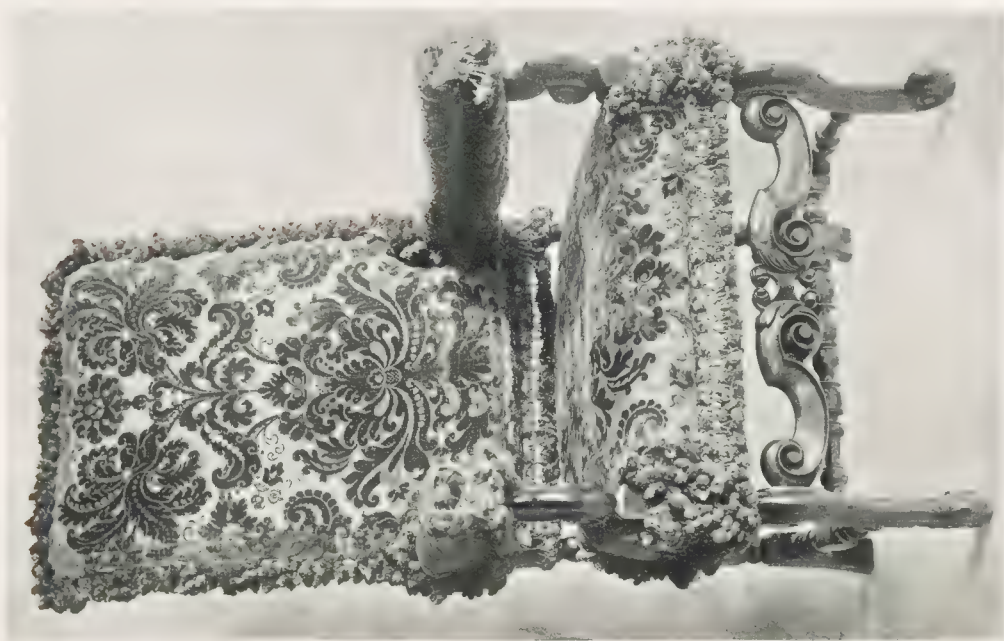


FIG. 91.—WALNUT UPHOLSTERED CHAIR.  
Height, 4 feet 5 inches. Property of Lord Sackville.

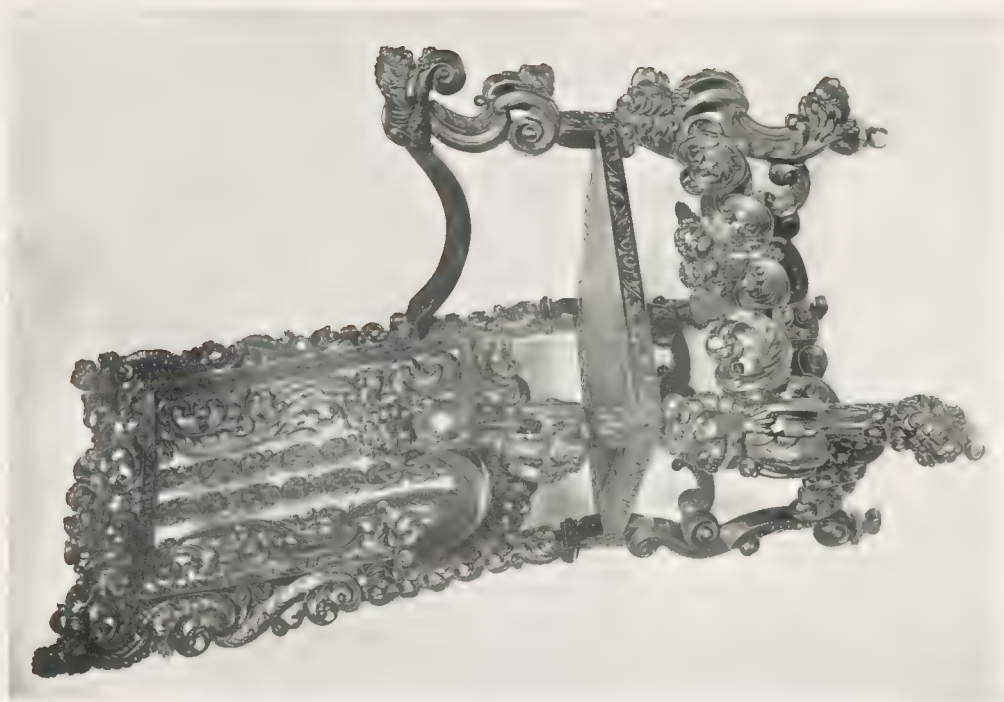


FIG. 92.—WALNUT CHAIR.  
Property of St. John's College, Cambridge.

## ENGLISH FURNITURE

motive of the carving, the backs being cane-backed, splat-backed, or upholstered, but invariably tall. The older type of upholstered arm-chair, as the development proceeded, was frequently covered in gorgeous patterned velvet. There are many such chairs at Knole, and fig. 91 is one of about the date 1675. The legs, arm-supports, and stretcher are formed of simple scrolls, but the arms are upholstered with the velvet, which is fine in design and of a beautiful blue; the tasselled fringe is of the same colour, and greatly enriches the rather simple form of the wood-work.

Fig. 92 is a most elaborate and ornamental chair, of about 1680. The cresting, frame, arm-supports, and stretchers are composed of a series of highly decorated scrolls, the points of interest being emphasised by the introduction of lions' and cherubs' heads; the back is composed of four splats carved in a similar design, and the seat is caned to receive a squab; the legs, of contorted form, begin and finish in lions' heads; the whole of the carving is executed with great spirit, and although the detail is somewhat overlavish and redundant, the effect is imposing. The double cherubs' heads are suggestive of the favourite form of ornament so often introduced by Gibbon, but the touch of the carving is too heavy for that school. From the frequency with which the lion is introduced into the decoration, the chair was probably in some way connected with royalty, and the historical tradition in connection with it is as follows. Harraden, in his *Cantabrigia Depicta*, 1809, mentions



FIG. 93.—WALNUT CHAIR. Height, 4 feet 2 inches.  
Property of ROBERT W. J. RUSHBROOKE, Esq.



## ENGLISH FURNITURE

the ancient gallery at St. John's College, hung with portraits, and possessing a set of very curious chairs, said to have been presented to the Master's Lodge by Charles II., one of them being 'A large elbow-chair, curiously ornamented with cherubims, lions' heads, etc.' But Cooper, in his *Memorials of Cambridge*, says, 'A large, richly carved arm-chair, which is in one of the apartments, is supposed to have been made for the use of Charles II. when he visited the College with his Queen in September 1681.' The ornate work of the scrolling and carving corresponds in date with this visit to the University, and it is probable that the King gave the chair, to be used by the Master of St. John's, then Vice-Chancellor of the University, for had the chair been specially prepared for the King, the royal arms would certainly have been introduced.

Fig. 93 is an early and tall form of what is termed a ladder-back chair, the splats or bars being in this instance constructed of double scrolls, horizontally inserted into knobbed and collared uprights, carved with rough acanthus. The cresting represents two cherubs supporting an effigy of King James II., and on the front stretcher that of his Queen, her hair down and breast uncovered, as at her coronation; which event this chair must have been intended to commemorate, as its date, 1685, coincides with that event; the finials also are formed as crowns.

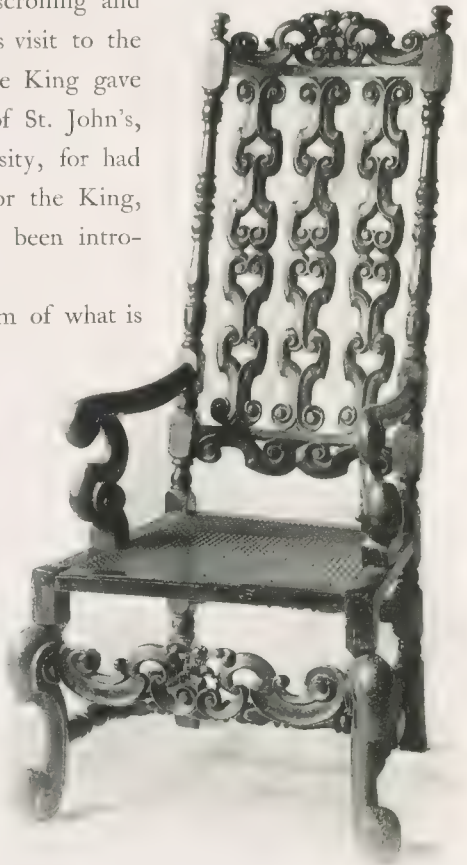


FIG. 94.—WALNUT CHAIR. Property of FRANK GREEN, Esq.

## ENGLISH FURNITURE

The frame to the seat is carved in an irregular form, and still possesses the original caning, which is circular. Although we know stools were constantly used as seats for meals, during the reigns of James and William, sets of tall chairs, without arms and with very narrow backs, were also made for the dining-rooms.

An interesting arm-chair, of about 1685, and one of a pair, is fig. 94. In this instance the scrolled splats are perpendicular, and the uprights of the back being balustered, the arms are set at some distance from the front of the seat, as the rake of the chair is considerable; the legs have a very pronounced outward curve. This chair is painted black, a prevalent fashion at the end of Charles's reign. Fig. 95 is another variety of small chair of this time; the walnut frame is carved with coarse acanthus, and the form is interesting and unusual.

About this time a type was introduced from France, in which one open but connected splat formed the back, surmounted by a high cresting. The carving of this back and cresting was in many instances of very fine quality, and this shape was probably confined to the richer section of the community, as it is rare to find a genuine chair of this character indifferently carved. They were probably in a great many instances made by French workmen domiciled in this country, as they invariably lack the originality of indigenous work. Fig. 96 (*a*) is a well-carved specimen of about the year 1687; the uprights of plain baluster shape give great value



FIG. 95.—WALNUT CHAIR.  
Property of MESSRS. MORANT.



(b)

FIG. 96. -WALNUT CHAIRS.

(c)





FIG. 97. PEAR-WOOD AND MAHOGANY CHAIR.  
Property of JAMES ORROCK, Esq.

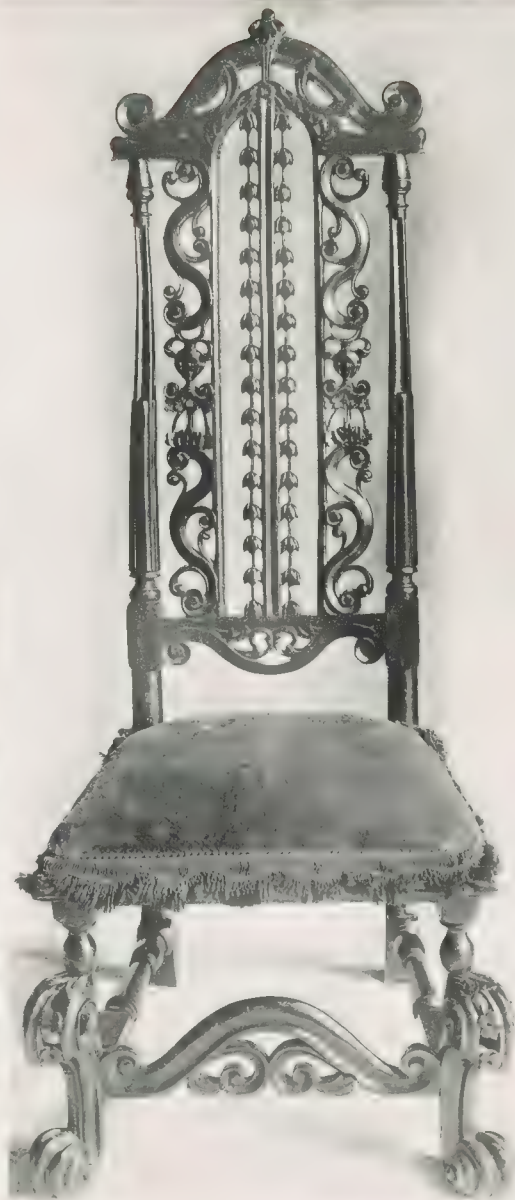


FIG. 98.—WALNUT CHAIR.  
Property of FRANK GREEN, Esq.

## ENGLISH FURNITURE

to the elaborated back legs and stretcher ; the carved patera at the tenons repeat the design of the early Restoration chairs, the legs are still of scroll form, but here end in lion claws, and the front stretcher repeats the form of the cresting. Fig. 96 (*b*) is another and later specimen, in which French inspiration is even more apparent ; the stretcher is dropped on account of the baluster leg, and the uprights of the back are not so good in proportion as in the preceding specimen. Fig. 97 is of about 1690, the cupped leg and serpentine stretcher pointing to this date ; the concave and semi-Gothic moulding of the uprights is very unusual ; the open design of the back is due to the interesting fact that the splat being made of mahogany can bear a greater strain ; the rest of the chair is pear-wood ; the seat to this type of chair was invariably upholstered. The desire to give a lighter appearance to the backs of chairs was evidently increasing at this time, and the top rail, which had hitherto been tenoned within the uprights, now formed a capping, and increased in height, so that towards the end of the century finials disappeared altogether, and the top rail finished the uprights. In fig. 98, of the date 1686, this increase of lightness is very apparent. Down the centre are two long strings of conventional decoration representing the catkins of the *Garrya eliptica*, framed on each side by a graceful border of open scroll-work, a hooped cresting heads the fluted uprights, and the perforated knees resemble those of earlier chairs ; the knobbed union with the seat-rail generally occurs at this time.

Fig. 99 is a spray of the *Garrya eliptica*, the flower from which the swags, and pendants of so-called husks, were taken ; in the late eighteenth century this ornament became a most prominent feature in decoration. Fig. 100 is another arm-chair of this new and light type, with a more elaborate cresting and carved back ; the arms and legs scroll outwardly, but in their somewhat purposeless curves show the end of an evolution ; the front stretcher still repeats the form of a cresting, though a certain amount of emptiness is apparent in the effort to obtain lightness of construction. These chairs suffered, inasmuch as they were built upon traditional form

## ENGLISH FURNITURE

that had ceased to be invested with its original feeling. Fig. 101 is a chair, somewhat similar, without arms, and one of the narrow-backed variety made for the dining-table; in fig. 102, for the same purpose, a year or two later in date, the finials are still preserved; the frame to the



FIG. 99.—FLOWER OF THE 'GARRYA ELIPTICA.'



## ENGLISH FURNITURE

carving is escalloped, but the workmanship of the chair is very elementary, and suggests country origin. A chair, with a similar motive in the back, but of higher class workmanship, is shown in fig. 103. Here the cresting heads the uprights of the back, and three moulded bars take the place of caning; the cup-topped legs are in octagon, finishing in scroll-feet; the serpentine stretcher and these legs are of the date 1690; the seat is caned, but there are no traces that the back has ever been treated in this manner, and the three upright mouldings are original.

In the withdrawing-rooms of the rich, upholstered and padded chairs still continued to be in request, giving great opportunity for the display of gorgeous English and Genoa velvets, which were put on with an upholstery of less elaboration than in the last reign; and flat galon often took the place of the previous tasselled trimmings and fringes, this selection being guided by a quieter and more restrained taste. The furnishing and decoration of the new buildings at Hampton Court Palace gave opportunity for much that was new, and the descriptions of the energetic Celia Fiennes again give interesting details of the furniture in some of the new rooms in William

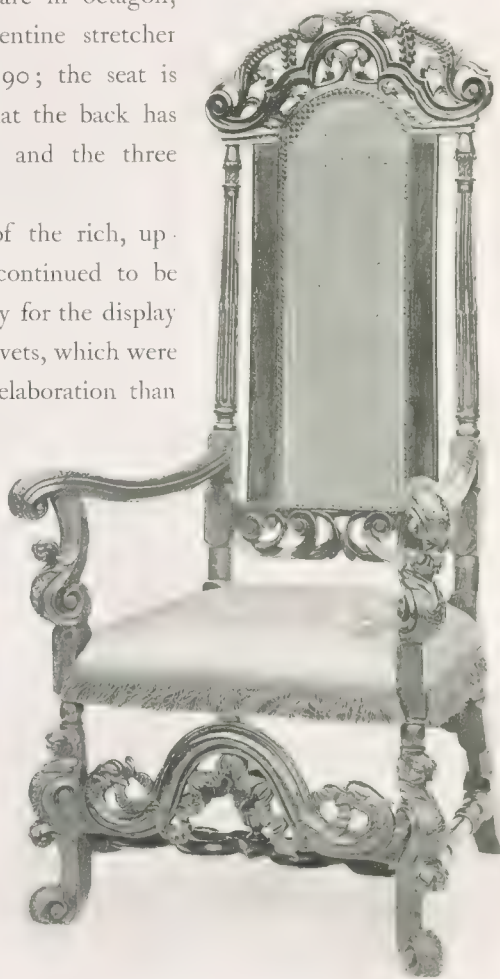


FIG. 10.—WALNUT CHAIR.

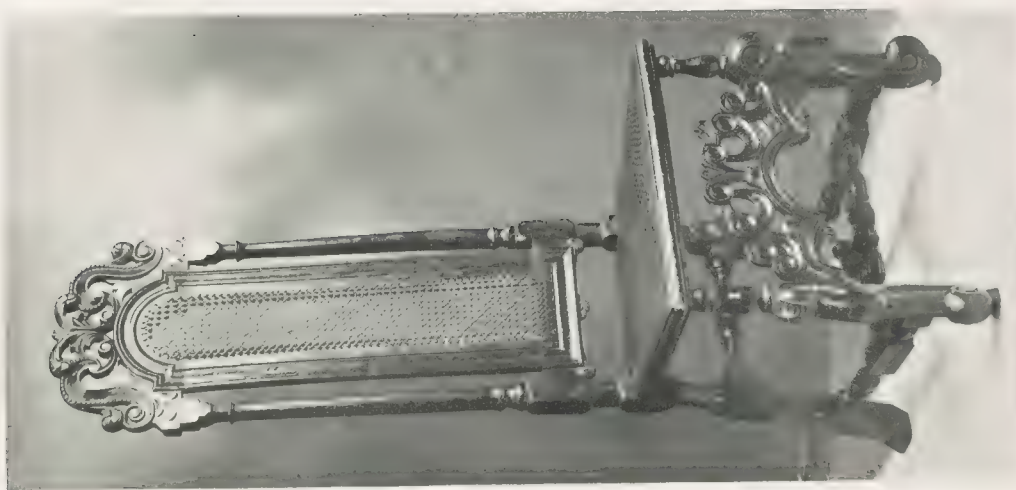


FIG. 101.—WALNUT CHAIR.  
Property of FRANK F. BURTON, Esq.

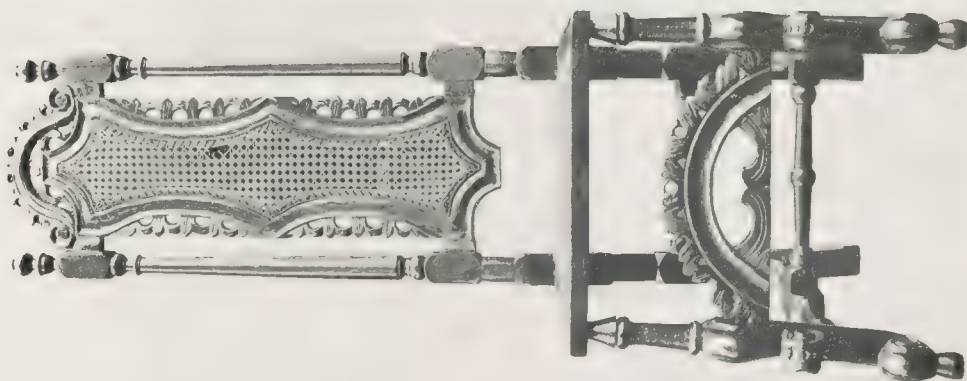


FIG. 102. WALNUT CHAIR.  
Property of A. L. RADFORD, Esq.

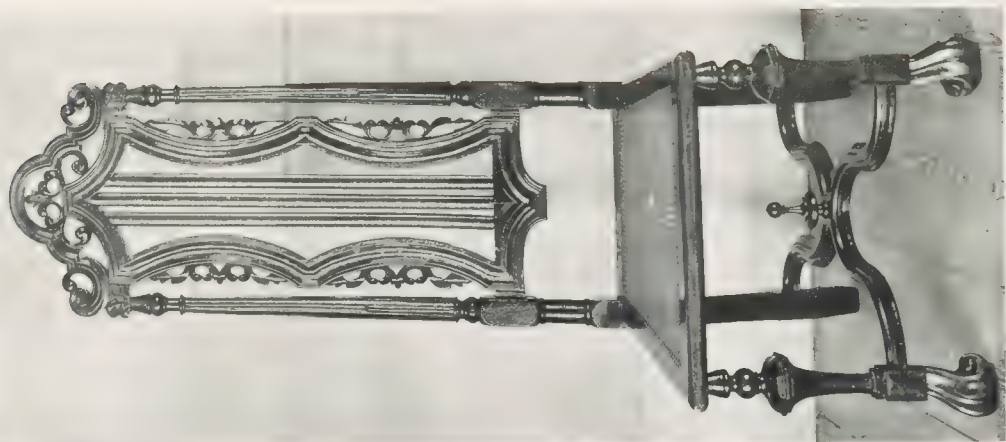


FIG. 103. WALNUT CHAIR. Height, 4 feet 4 inches.  
Property of the HON. CHARLOTTE MARIA LADY NORTH  
and R. EDEN DICKSON, Esq.

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and Mary's reign, when evidently chairs, etc., of a previous time were re-upholstered. Fig. 104 is one of these, for the wood-work is of about 1680, and the crimson and cream-coloured Genoa velvet is of rather later



FIG. 104.—WALNUT UPHOLSTERED CHAIR.  
HAMPTON COURT PALACE.



FIG. 105.—WALNUT UPHOLSTERED CHAIR.  
Property of the DUKE OF BEAUFORT.



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date. Fig. 105 is a narrow, tall-back arm-chair, the upholstery being framed in wood ; the only attempt at carving is the cresting composed of a series of short C scrolls ; the covering is not original.

Fig. 106 represents a walnut arm-chair from a fine set at Hardwick, of about the date 1690. The cresting preserves the strong Carolean irregularity of form found on scroll-back chairs, but the arm-supports and legs are in the newer style, resembling those of the day-bed and settee from Hornby (figs. 73 and 74), which cannot be before 1697. The long garrya pendants that edge the back are exceedingly original and fine in execution ; the frame, arms, and seat-rail are carved with panels of alternate floral tracery and acanthus ; the back and seat have their original covering of crimson velvet, with a broad band of highly raised silver embroidery, now almost perished. This is one of the most remarkable chairs in England, both for beauty and originality, and coming as it does at the end of an evolution, is surprising in its excellence. In fig. 107 the strange outward scroll below the arms found on the settee (Plate VI.) has been reproduced in chair form, but although exceedingly quaint, cannot be pronounced beautiful, as the sides overweight the back ; it is probably a kind of sleeping-chair, and the lower side scrolls could be used as a leg rest ; the serpentine stretcher is missing, greatly detracting from the appearance of the lower portion. The covering is now a deep mulberry velvet, studded at the edges with nails, and put on probably some time during the eighteenth century ; the eccentric form of the chair does not suggest an original covering of plain material ; the cresting of the top, consisting of curved scrolls, is covered in the velvet. In fig. 108 (a) the back has no visible wooden frame, and is entirely formed of padded upholstery, as in earlier Charles II. chairs ; the arms are very marked in their curve, and where they scroll over have a strong outward turn ; the arm-supports and legs are capped, and the latter finish in scroll-feet ; the wood-work of this chair, although of walnut, is painted black, and ringed with a bronze gold ; the set is mentioned in an inventory of about 1700,



FIG. 106.—WALNUT UPHOLSTERED CHAIR. Height, 4 feet 9 inches; width, 2 feet 3 inches.  
Property of the DUKE OF DEVONSHIRE.

## ENGLISH FURNITURE

at Hornby Castle, as being painted in these colours ; the velvet with which they are covered is of Utrecht quality but of English make ; the design is extremely effective and evidently calculated for this width of chair ; the broad scrolled galon on the seat carries out the other lines, and the



FIG. 107.—WALNUT UPHOLSTERED CHAIR. Property of the DUKE OF LEEDS.



## ENGLISH FURNITURE

upholstery of the end of the seventeenth century is most interesting, and proves that much thought was still given to the finishing of furniture. Fig. 108 (*b*) is an upholstered chair without arms, forming part of the suite to the stool and double settee, from Hornby, already illustrated; the



(*a*) FIG. 108.—WALNUT UPHOLSTERED CHAIRS. Property of the DUKE OF LEEDS. (*b*)

## ENGLISH FURNITURE

wood-work is painted black and gold, and the lower rail of the back repeats the serpentine lines of the cresting; here the seat and back are framed in carved wood; these were originally covered in figured velvet to match the settee, but have been replaced by the present crimson damask. Fig. 109, from Hampton Court Palace, given to complete this series of late seventeenth-century chairs, was probably made about 1695, and re-covered during the next reign, when the bed and stools, to which this suite belongs, were evidently upholstered in the present rich tawny, cream and claret velvet that is still in sound condition. The scrolled arms of the tall-backed settees are repeated on this chair, and die in a cone-shaped roll that rests upon the front rail of the seat, a finish that was adopted on sofas and tall-back easy-chairs for many years during the following century. The original galon trimming has been replaced by a modern gimp, and the velvet is an interesting instance of the so-called Genoa or Venetian velvet, made in England about 1702; the rather crude drawing of the design and peculiar flatness of the manufacture point to this period, when great attempts were made to



FIG. 109.—WALNUT UPHOLSTERED CHAIR.  
HAMPTON COURT PALACE.

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restrict all importations of silks and velvets, though at the same time the retailers found it necessary to ascribe these products to foreign origin in order to obtain a ready sale. The number of Huguenot silk-weavers that took refuge in this country has already been given; their influence upon the silk trade left a permanent impression, and during the reigns of William and Mary and Anne this manufacture made great progress. Although the English silk-weaver had learnt all his trade secrets from the French workman, he naturally resented the term 'French make' being applied to goods made in England under foreign influence. The Government, however, regarded these refugees as a profitable investment, and in 1709 granted £24,000 towards the support of artisans of all trades that arrived in this country during that year. Before the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, England had spent as much as £200,000 per annum on the importation of foreign silks; by the year 1698, the English silk and velvet manufacture had become so successful, that importation was totally forbidden for a time. In 1692 a company petitioned to be incorporated, showing that 'Having with great expense and industry attained the new invention of making, dressing, and lustrating of silks. That they have already caused to be made great quantities of the said silks at least equalling the manufacture of France, and being further resolved to promote the same to the good of the nation so as to thereby employ many thousands of poor people, and also to prevent the sending of vast sums of money to France for the said silks, they pray to be incorporated.'

Marqueterie furniture had much in common with these richly patterned fabrics, and continued to be greatly in demand. Plate VII. represents a table manufactured during the reign of James II., richly inlaid with the coloured marqueterie already described; the jessamine flower is sparingly introduced, and it is unusual to find the green ivory leaves in combination with so much acanthus and other conventional form. The broad feather-edged border of pear-wood, and the laurelled oval of the





PLATE VII (AGE OF WALNUT)

TABLE INLAID WITH MARQUETERIE

HEIGHT, 2 FEET 6 INCHES  
LENGTH, 3 "  $6\frac{1}{2}$  "  
WIDTH, 2 "  $3\frac{1}{2}$  "

PROPERTY OF  
LORD ZOUCHE OF HARYNGWORTH



*Study, London*





## ENGLISH FURNITURE

same wood, is tied with ribands in sycamore ; the groundwork of the top frame and stretcher is veneered in ebony ; the legs are cylindrical, solid, and of the same wood, inlaid on the round in a most skilful manner with marqueterie ; the difficulty of bending the green ivory is admirably overcome ; the stretcher uniting these legs is inlaid with the same coloured flowers.

It has been customary to ascribe these elaborate and strongly coloured specimens to Dutch workmanship ; but investigation proves that, compared with the English manufacture, Dutch marqueterie is always duller in colour and more disconnected in design. Italy supplied the real suggestion of colour for our inlay in stained woods, whilst France, in exiling her workmen, introduced to us the patterns of Boulle, which was the later development of this highly decorated style. This table portrays a coming change in marqueterie, when the flowers disappear altogether, giving way to fine acanthus and minute scroll-work of seaweed form.

Between this and the table-top (fig. 110), of about 1690, there is a gap that it is difficult to fill. Here the same treatment of acanthus foliage, with a still slighter introduction of the floral element, is apparent ; the motive of the oval and four triangular panels is abandoned in favour of a field of elaborate design, which is so complete, that the hand of the domiciled foreign artist is strongly suggested, but the cutting of the marqueterie and the execution are entirely English ; the ground is a dark walnut, the pattern being inlaid in sycamore of a rich yellow colour, and the influence of the brass and tortoise-shell designs of Boulle is secondary in feeling to the English arrangement and colours of the woods. The legs (fig. 111), inlaid with the same fine marqueterie, are of double C form, a pattern that remained in fashion till the commencement of the seventeenth century. Fig. 112 is a little later in date. Here the marqueterie is contained within circular and trefoil form, and is of rather coarser cutting ; conventional birds are introduced in the centre panel, and the acanthus



FIG. 110.—WALNUT INLAID TABLE-TOP. Length, 3 feet 4 inches ; width, 2 feet 8 inches.  
Property of S. CAMPBELL CORY, Esq.



FIG. 111.—SAME INLAID TABLE. Height, 2 feet 5 inches.



## ENGLISH FURNITURE



FIG. 112.—WALNUT INLAID TABLE-TOP. Length, 3 feet; width, 1 foot 11 inches.  
Property of S. CAMPBELL CORY, Esq.

begins to simulate fine seaweed design. The ground is walnut, cut on the straight, and a sand-burnt feather border of marqueterie surrounds the edge. The legs resemble those of the last specimen, being of double C scroll shape. Fig. 113 is another little walnut table inlaid with panels of marqueterie of this type, but with the cupped and turned leg found on cabinets and chairs late in William's reign. Another interesting inlaid example is shown in fig. 114. Here the top lifts out, and in the well are inlaid the points of a backgammon board, the top being treated in the same manner for chess or draughts; this table is heavy, and consequently supported on six legs, cleverly worked in an open twist; the stretcher uniting these is of the usual serpentine form and rests on bun-feet. There



FIG. 113.—WALNUT INLAID TABLE. Property of C. E. KEMPE, Esq.



FIG. 114.—WALNUT GAME TABLE. Property of FRANK GREEN, Esq.

## ENGLISH FURNITURE

are parts of a similar table, once the property of Samuel Pepys, and still in possession of a member of the family ; it has unfortunately been added to, and mounted on nineteenth-century legs. Fig. 115 shows this table-top (which is in its original condition) with some of the chess-men, of white and green ivory, no doubt those actually used by Pepys.

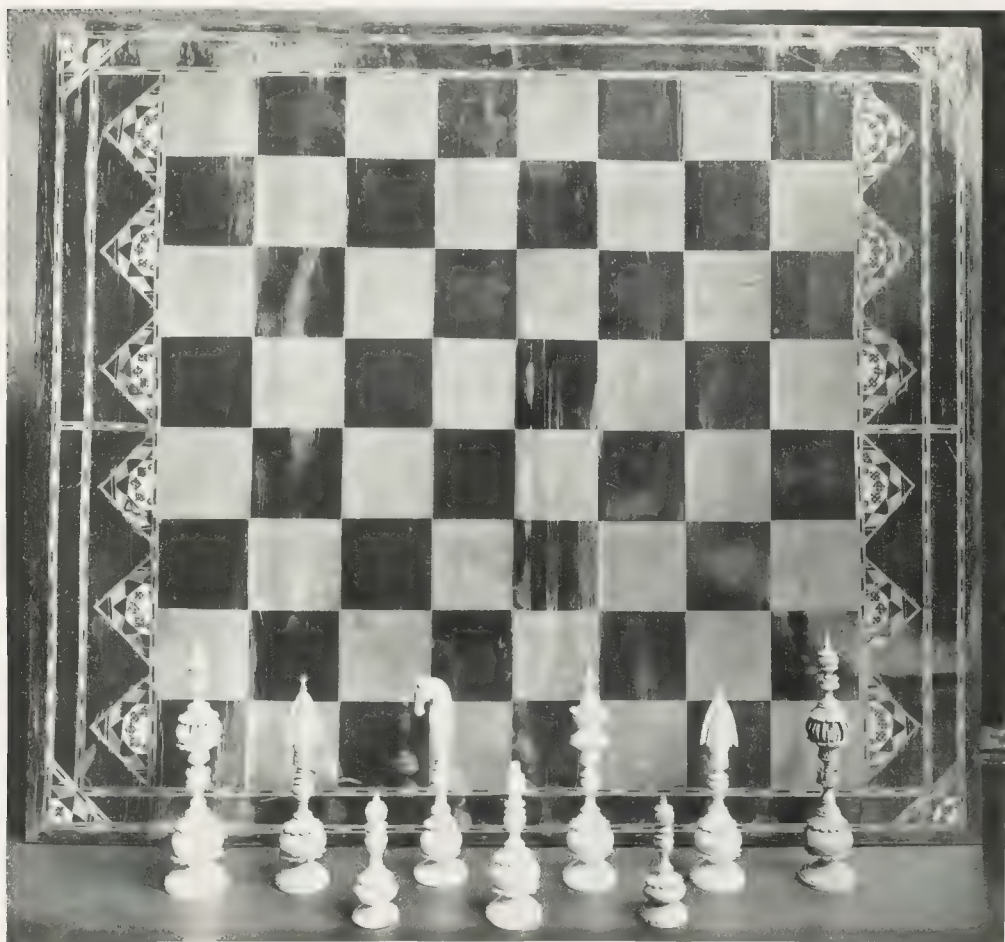


FIG. 115. -WALNUT AND HOLLY GAME TABLE TOP.  
Formerly belonging to SAMUEL PEPYS. Property of MISS COCKERELL.



## ENGLISH FURNITURE

Another piece of furniture connected with this interesting person, and originally made for his private use, is one of the oak bookcases (fig. 116) from the Pepysian Library at Magdalene College, Cambridge. There is a reference to them in his will as follows :—

‘6thly That the whole number and bulke of my books being soe ascertained one or more new presses be provided for the convenient containing them soe as to be neither too much crowded nor Stand too loose.’

These bookcases are twelve in number, and all are 7 feet 9 inches high and 4 feet 7 inches wide, united by narrow mirrors about 8 inches in width; the cornice of each is delicately carved with laurel branches, alternately upright and inverted, between a waved ribbon. The cupboards open in four doors, in which the lock-catches are hidden and intricate; the surbase moulding to the lower compartment is richly carved with acanthus. In this particular press the original cipher volumes of the celebrated Diary can be seen on the right-hand side of the cupboard on the third shelf.

It is probable that many of the decorated tables were used for cards and tea, the afternoon and evening amusements of ladies of fashion. The folding card-table, with its wells for counters and money, had not yet been introduced, and cards were played on small marqueterie, oak, or walnut tables, as in the previous reigns. Cards were much played during Tudor and Jacobean times, and during the reign of James I. the fashion had become so great that the audiences used to amuse themselves with cards at the play-house while waiting for the piece to begin. During the Commonwealth the practice declined, and cards were entitled the ‘Devil’s Books,’ but after the Restoration the passion recommenced. In the Verney Papers of 1685 there are letters passing between Sir Ralph Verney and his sister, Lady Gardiner, who is evidently addicted to gambling, and who asks him to lend her £100. He answers: ‘I doe not wonder that play (which has ruined soe many Families and soe vast Estates) has reduced you to soe great Extremitys as almost to see the destruction of Youres.’ He sends her the £100, but adds: ‘You are noe way qualified for a



FIG. 116.—OAK BOOKCASE. Formerly belonging to SAMUEL PEPYS.  
Property of MAGDALENE COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

## ENGLISH FURNITURE

Gamester but lie at the mercy of All who play with you.' However much they were reprimanded, women continued to play, the very fashionable game being Ombre, introduced by Catherine of Braganza. Basset, said to



FIG. 117.—WALNUT INLAID WRITING-TABLE. Height, 3 feet 1 inch; width, 3 feet; flap, 1 foot 1 inch. Property of the HON. CHARLOTTE MARIA LADY NORTH and R. EDEN DICKSON, Esq.



## ENGLISH FURNITURE

have been invented by a Venetian, who was exiled for his ingenuity, was brought to England by the French friends of Louise de Keroualle ; but these small tables could not have been used for basset, as in this game the bank, in a large pile of gold, was spread upon the table, and the players were several in number. Faro, or Pharaoh, is mentioned by Pepys. At



FIG. 118.—WALNUT INLAID WRITING-TABLE. Property of FRANK E. BURTON, Esq.

## ENGLISH FURNITURE

one of these games Barbara Castlemaine, in 1667, won £15,000 in a night and lost £25,000 on a subsequent evening. Quadrille, though much played in William's and Anne's reigns at small tables, never took so strong a hold upon society as ombre, while Whist was a game played for many years in the servants' hall under the name of whisk or swobbers, until some gentlemen who met at the Crown Coffee-house studied its principles, and established rules that were finally formulated by Hoyle in 1743. These small tables were all furnished with a drawer for the cards and counters. Specimens, with a panel of needlework inserted on the top, exist, worked with representations of playing-cards.

Other small articles of table form are writing-desks, such as fig. 117. The top opens in a flap 13 inches in width, disclosing a series of drawers and pigeon-holes; this, when let down, is supported by the two centre legs that swing forward on pivots, forming brackets; for the sake of strength, an upper serpentine stretcher is also introduced, uniting the four outside legs at their shoulders; these are an early instance of the spindle-shaped leg, and are of yew, exceedingly rich in colour. The marqueterie, covering the inside and outside of the piece, is of arabesque pattern, walnut on a light ground, and bordered with the favourite feather-edging; yew pendants are introduced between the legs on the front and sides. Fig. 118 is another of these somewhat rare pieces. In this case the ground is walnut and the inlay sycamore; the construction of the upper portion exactly resembles the last example, and shows the working of the supports to the flap; the legs are of yew, and the stretcher is single, working on a wooden hinge. The plainness of this stretcher is relieved by an inlay of marqueterie on the top surface, which is not visible in the illustration.

There is much interesting furniture at Burghley, and at one time specimens of marqueterie must have been numerous, as parts of this enormous house were evidently redecorated and refurnished towards the end of Charles II.'s reign. Walpole refers to the decorations of the





PLATE VIII (AGE OF WALNUT)

CABINET PRESS INLAID WITH MARQUETERIE

HEIGHT, 7 FEET 3 INCHES  
LENGTH, 5 " 4 $\frac{1}{2}$  "  
DEPTH, 1 FOOT 11 "

PROPERTY OF  
THE MARQUESS OF EXETER







## ENGLISH FURNITURE

walls, painted by Verrio, and his words give a good idea of the general aspect of the place :—

‘The House itself, at least the new apartments may be said to be one entire picture. The staircase and ceilings of all the fine lodgings, the chapel, the hall, the late Earl’s closet are all finely painted by Varrio; of whose work I need say no more than this, that the Earl kept him twelve years in his family, wholly employed him in painting those ceilings, staircases, etc., and allowed him a coach and horses, and equipage, a table and servants, and a very considerable pension.’

The decorative work of Verrio that still remains is by no means attractive, and the ceilings and walls at Hampton Court Palace, painted by him, prove that even the most ornate marqueterie and gorgeous upholstered furniture must have seemed tame and quiet beside the sprawling nudities and crude draperies so typical of this artist.

One of these elaborate pieces of furniture at Burghley is Plate VIII., of about 1690; it stands over 7 feet in height, and represents one of the most important examples of English marqueterie in existence. The cornice is curiously out of character, being composed of a plain frieze; the doors are inlaid with a fine design of flowers and scrolled acanthus in yellow and brown woods on a black ground; two sprays only of the white jessamine are introduced, and without any green leaves, an expiring effort of this fashion; and the long scrolled form of the endive-leaved acanthus is seen gradually overpowering the flowers. The border is of isolated panels of the same marqueterie on a ground of walnut oyster-pieces, the inside of these doors being also veneered in the same way; the lower portion is formed as a chest of drawers, but introduces the unusual feature of the design occupying the surface of three drawers; the handles, for this reason, are kept unobtrusive and of wood. The cross-bandings and mouldings of walnut are of beautiful workmanship; the feet are an early introduction of the flat bracket kind, that later became universal. Fig. 119 is another of these cupboards of the same date, in this case mounted on a stand; the acanthus scrolls are unusually interesting, and the floral portion of the design is entirely subservient to their curves. The

## ENGLISH FURNITURE

groundwork to the marqueterie is composed of ebony ; the inside, as in the former example, is an open cupboard originally filled with shelves ; the plinth is inlaid with the same large and free marqueterie, and rests upon a



FIG. 119.—WALNUT INLAID CUPBOARD. Property of SIR GEORGE DONALDSON.



FIG. 120.—WALNUT INLAID CABINET. Height, 5 feet 4 inches; depth, 2 feet 8 inches; length, 3 feet 8 inches. Property of MESSRS. J. MALLETT AND SON.



## ENGLISH FURNITURE

stand composed of six well-turned yew legs, united by an undulating flat stretcher of the time.

A cabinet of rather later date, with much finer marqueterie, is seen in fig. 120; the cornice and ovolo frieze are well defined, and the surface of the whole cabinet is covered with circular designs, filled with very fine marqueterie of the seaweed type, in light wood on a light walnut ground; these patches of brilliant yellow colour are surrounded by a darker inlay of laburnum. The cabinet opens on the usual series of small drawers, inlaid with the same fine marqueterie, that on the inside of the doors being somewhat coarser; the stretcher and the arrangement of the double C scroll legs to the stand are most unusual; marqueterie runs down the upper surface of these legs, which are made in short portions, joined together, and veneered only on the outer side. This style of leg is late for the date of the cabinet, which is about 1695, for it was not until the end of the century that this very fine marqueterie obtained favour.

Marqueterie furniture had now arrived at a style that is peculiarly distinctive to the end of William's reign, a style in which external form is very simple, but with a surface decoration so minute and elaborate, that from a

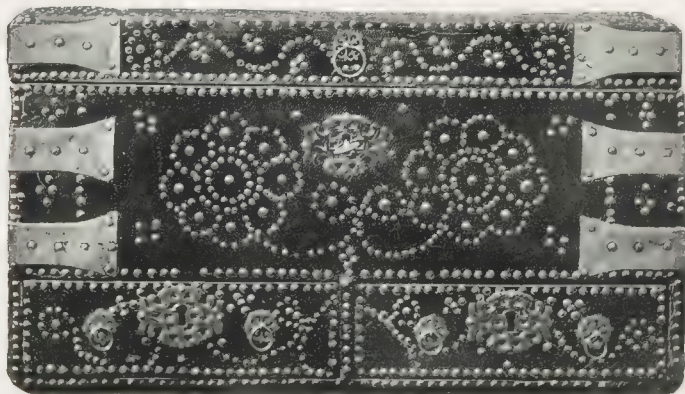


FIG. 121. LEATHER-COVERED TRAVELLING CHEST.  
Formerly belonging to WILLIAM III. Property of DUDLEY FALCKE, Esq.

## ENGLISH FURNITURE

little distance it is barely perceptible. From 1690 to 1695, public taste was very strongly influenced by that of Queen Mary, which was exceedingly refined and original. Defoe writes in his *Tour through Great Britain*:—

‘The Queen brought in the custom or humour as I may call it of furnishing houses with china ware which increased to a strange degree afterwards, piling their China upon the tops of cabinets, scrutores and every chymney Piece to the top of the ceilings, and even setting up shelves for their china ware, where they wanted such places, till it became a grivance in the Expence of it and even injurious to their Families and Estates.’

He also says, in describing the tastes of this Queen during the rebuilding and redecoration of Hampton Court Palace:—

‘Her Majesty had there a fine apartment, with a Sett of Lodgings for her private Retreat only, but most exquisitely furnished; particularly a fine Chintz Bed, then a great curiosity—another of her own work while in Holland very magnificent, and here was also her Majesty’s fine collection of Delft ware, which indeed was very large and fine, and here was also a vast stock of fine China ware, the like whereof was not to be seen in England.’

At Windsor, he also notices in her room ‘A bed hung with Atlasse and Magglapatan Chintz.’ Burnet was enthusiastic about the virtues and industry of Mary, and in reference to her needlework wrote:—

‘In all those hours that were not given to better employment she wrought with



FIG. 122.—TOP OF SAME.  
Formerly belonging to WILLIAM III. Property of DUDLEY FALCKE, Esq.

## ENGLISH FURNITURE

her own hands ; and sometimes with so constant a diligence, as if she had been to earn her bread by it. It was a new thing, and looked like a sight, to see a Queen work so many hours a day.'

The interest in needlework as a covering to furniture was widespread, owing to the Queen's example ; for a great deal of the furniture in the royal apartments at Hampton Court Palace was covered with her handiwork, and was for many years one of the sights of the palace. William's mind, equally energetic, devoted itself more to the reconstruction of this building than to the furniture. His taciturn nature, inherited from his father, was no doubt augmented by his continual ill-health, and the remedies prescribed, which included garlic, crab's eyes, and pounded hog's lice, were not calculated to increase his taste for art. Of the furniture personally connected with this King but little remains ; there is a small marqueterie writing-table at Windsor, mounted in silver, and a bed at Hampton Court Palace, given later in illustration ; the leather-covered travelling-box (figs. 121 and 122), bearing his crown and initials in gilt nails, is therefore of interest.

Fig. 123 shows a writing-cabinet of the same shape and construction as that from Badminton (fig. 53), but inlaid with the fine seaweed pattern of about 1698. It is veneered in plain walnut, with panels of dark marqueterie on a light ground, the sides being also decorated in this manner. Fig. 124 is a small press, surmounting a chest of drawers ; the doors and face of the drawers are inlaid with seaweed marqueterie in oval-shaped panels, and the piece is of the compact and useful form characteristic of the close of the seventeenth century. Fig. 125 is a rarer shape to find inlaid with this marqueterie ; it is a cupboard surmounting a chest of drawers, the top forming a writing-desk. The frame and heading have narrow panels of marqueterie in delicate arabesques which hold the original looking-glass panels ; the desk opens in a flap inlaid in the same manner ; it is of about the date 1700, it is in untouched condition, and consequently beautiful in colour.



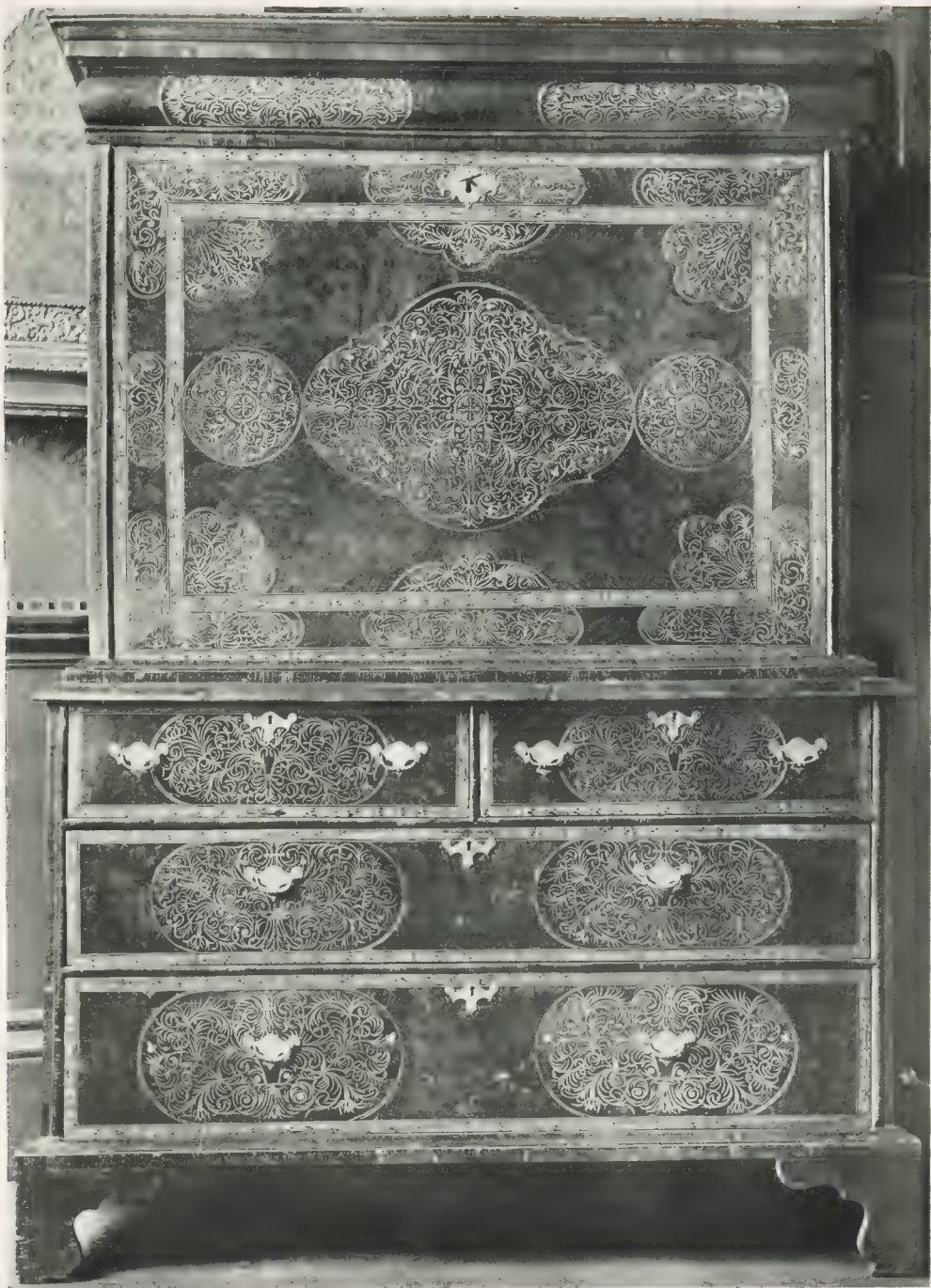


FIG. 123.—WALNUT INLAID WRITING-CABINET.

Height, 5 feet 7 inches; length, 3 feet 4 inches; depth, 1 foot 6 inches. Property of J. ANNAN BRYCE, Esq.



FIG. 124.—WALNUT INLAID PRESS.

Height, 5 feet 3 inches; length, 3 feet 3 inches; depth, 1 foot 7 inches. Property of S. H. S. LOFTHOUSE, Esq.





FIG. 125.—WALNUT INLAID WRITING-CABINET.  
Height, 6 feet 8 inches; length, 3 feet 1 inch; depth, 1 foot 9 inches. Property of J. ANNAN BRYCE, Esq.



## ENGLISH FURNITURE

The form known as the knee-hole writing-table (fig. 126) was introduced about 1700. The top here is hinged in the centre, and folds back,



FIG. 126.—WALNUT INLAID KNEE-HOLE WRITING-TABLE. Height, 3 feet 4 inches  
Property of SIR GEORGE DONALDSON.



PLATE IX (AGE OF WALNUT)

CHEST OF DRAWERS INLAID WITH MARQUETERIE

HEIGHT, 3 FEET 10 INCHES

LENGTH, 3 " 1 INCH

DEPTH, 2 "







## ENGLISH FURNITURE

the front opening as a flap, forming a writing-desk; within are a series of small drawers. The lower portion is divided into eight small drawers with a narrow recess, in which is a cupboard that opens on other small drawers, and is surmounted by a single drawer. The top, sides, and front are veneered with walnut of fine figure, and inlaid throughout with oval panels of very delicate seaweed marqueterie, dark, on a light ground, and bordered with a sand-burnt edging. The stand is an early instance of the flat fretted leg, and is also inlaid; the handles, of button shape, are of turned walnut; the simple half-round mouldings are applied on a framing of deal. The remarkable finish of this piece, and the care with which the veneer is selected, rivals some of the French productions of the eighteenth century.

Plate ix. represents the top and front of a chest of drawers of similar workmanship, and of about the same date; the handles of cherub form are in silver.



## CHAPTER VI



OCASIONAL specimens of lacquer, such as cups, trays, and small boxes, had, with other Eastern curios, found their way into this country in Tudor times. The invention originated in Japan in the third century B.C., and red and gold lacquer is mentioned in Japanese writings of 380 A.D. This decorated lacquer was at first applied to drinking-vessels and other personal articles, as an impenetrable glazed protection to the surface, and eventually used decoratively to rooms, furniture, and especially screens, and represented an important form of Japanese art. Indian cabinets, as they were called at that time, are to be found occasionally mentioned in inventories at the end of Elizabeth's reign, and during the first thirty years of the seventeenth century a few cabinets and screens were brought over to this country from Holland by wealthy travellers. The Portuguese and English carried on a trade intercourse with Japan in Elizabethan times, but were expelled in 1637. The Dutch trade with the Japanese began about 1600, under severe restrictions, and was continually being suspended, so that the majority of the imported lacquer must have come through trade with China and the East India Company. It is not possible to name the date when these imported examples first inspired the English and Dutch craftsman to attempt an imitation of Oriental lacquer in connection with furniture, but it is certain that by 1689 the art of japanning, as it was then called, was widespread, and taught as an extra accomplishment in girls' schools, for in a letter dated 1689, from Edmund Verney to his young daughter Molly, then at school at 'Great Chelsey,' he wrote :—

‘I find you have a desire to learn to Jappan as you call it, and I approve of it; and so I shall of anything that is good and virtuous, therefore learn in God's name all good things and I will willingly be at the Charge so farr as I am able—tho. they come from Japan & from never so farr and Looke of an Indian Hue & odour for I admire all



FIG. 127.—LACQUER CABINET ON GILT PINE-WOOD STAND. Height, 5 feet 1 inch.  
Property of SIR SPENCER C. PONSONBY FANE.



FIG. 128.—THE SAME CABINET, OPEN.

## ENGLISH FURNITURE

accomplishments that will render you considerable & lovely in the sight of God & man, & therefore I hope you performe your Part according to yr word & employ yr time well & so I pray God blesse you. To learn this art costs a Guinea entrance & some 40/s more to buy materials to work upon.'



FIG. 129.—LACQUER CABINET AND STAND. Height, 5 feet 6 inches.  
Property of the DUKE OF BEAUFORT.



## ENGLISH FURNITURE

This japanning became a fashionable pursuit, and in the garrets and top galleries of old country-houses can still be seen worn-out boxes and tables, covered with specimens of this amateur decoration, that for a time developed into a craze.

In true Oriental lacquer, the ground is much smoother and more brilliant than in the imitations by England, France, and Holland. The colour and lustre of the different golds are also far more metallic, the designs are drawn with the peculiar sharp touch of the Oriental artist, and the distribution of the detail is more connected. Frequently unmounted Oriental panels were imported and made up into furniture here, but the finished cabinets from the East, entirely of native origin, were the most highly prized. In the household accounts of Charles II. there is an entry of £100, paid for 'two Japann cabinets'; these would probably have been of what is termed cut lacquer, which consisted of hollowing out in the wood the objects in the design, leaving fine black raised outlines, and



FIG. 130.—SAME LACQUER CABINET, OPEN. Property of the DUKE OF BEAUFORT.

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## ENGLISH FURNITURE

filling in the spaces with brilliant colours; no reproduction of this particular process was, however, attempted with any success in this country.

Fig. 127 is an English lacquer cabinet of bold and effective workmanship; the outside doors are decorated with water-birds, representations of a pagoda, and a group of flowers in high relief in reds and greens on a black and gold ground; the hinges, corner and lock-plates are brass, pierced and punched with a fine pattern; the doors open on a series of small drawers, lacquered in the same bold and effective manner. The inside of the doors (fig. 128) represents a tree in blossom in very high relief, the reds and green of the lacquer employed being most brilliant; the drawing of the descending duck, and also the tree, shows the work cannot be Oriental; on the other door are representations of a brace of pheasants; the work of the flowers, houses, and birds with which the small drawers are decorated prove but a crude acquaintance with Oriental drawing, and infer that the piece is an early attempt in English lacquer and perhaps of Suffolk origin, where the taste for this art first started. The stand is deal, carved in the full and florid style of 1670 to 1675; the ornament alternates in silver and gold. Fig. 129 is another cabinet of this description from Badminton. Here the water-birds with green necks and red backs are again repeated, and a tree in flower is introduced on the other door; at the bottom of each panel is a river with swans in flat painting; the brass hinges and corners correspond in design to those on the former cabinet, but the lock-plate is more elaborate. The decoration of the inside (fig. 130) is somewhat diversified; a tree with brilliant red blossoms and green leaves, and pheasants, are again introduced on the insides of the doors. The black lacquered stand is carved at the corners with the decoration of about 1680, and is supported by twisted columns; the stretcher takes the form of a shelf. In both these cabinets the relief of the lacquer is very high, and the colours far more brilliant than on Oriental specimens; they are very characteristic examples of this English craft. The demand for lacquer increased rapidly, and books were written

## ENGLISH FURNITURE

on the subject, containing numberless recipes for the instruction of both professionals and amateurs. In 1688 John Stalker of the Golden Ball, and George Parker of Oxford, published a work entitled *A Treatise of Japanning and Varnishing*, apparently for the use of amateurs, and the following extract shows how seriously lacquer must have occupied the public taste in those days :—

‘ Since our Gentry have of late attained to the knowledge and distinction of true Japan—they are not so fond of colours but covet which is rightly imitated, rather than any work besides this never so finical and gaudy. The most excellent therefore in this Art copy out of the Indian as exactly as may be in respect of draught nature and likeness. Well then as Painting has made us an honourable prevision for our Bodies, so Japanning has taught us a method, no way inferior to it, for the splendour and preservation of our furniture and Houses. These buildings like our bodies continually tending to ruin and dissolution, are still in want of fresh supplies, and reparations, on the one hand they are assaulted with unexpected mischances, on the other with the injuries of time and weather; but the art of Japanning has made them almost impregnable against both. No damp air, no mouldring worm or corroding time can possibly deface it, and which is more wonderful, though its ingredients, the gums are in their own nature inflammable; yet this most vigorously resists the fire, and is itself found to be incombustible.’

The authors, after many remarks of this kind, proceed to give a long list of recipes for gilding and bronzing in every possible form, some of the directions being interesting and quaint. Of gold dust they say :—

‘ To speak of the Brass dust commonly called amongst the Artists Gold dust, the best gold dust is that, which is finest and of the brightest and most Goldlike colour, which you may best discern by taking a littel in your finger and squeezing it along your finger with your thumb, if bad it will appear of a dull clayish colour and will never work lively or bright.’

The usual process was first to draw the view and objects, then model the rocks and figures in composition and apply the gold size, and as the writer of the book says, ‘ When it is clammy and sticks somewhat to your fingers but not so as to bring off any, then it is high time with your leather to lay and rub on the gold dust, if it clings to your finger, but not so as to bring off any with it, then know it is not sufficiently drie.’ After endless recipes for lacquering and gilding comes a series of Anglo-Oriental



## ENGLISH FURNITURE

drawings, representing somewhat indifferently the objects introduced by the Chinese and Japanese into the decoration of their lacquer, but that the authors were under the impression that their illustrations were an improvement on the native drawings is evident from the following remark :—

‘In the Cutts or patterns at the end of the book, we have exactly imitated their



FIG. 131.—LACQUER CABINET ON GILT STAND. Height, 5 feet 8 inches.  
Property of SIR SPENCER C. PONSONBY FANE.



FIG. 132.—SCARLET LACQUER WRITING-CABINET.  
Property of LORD DE L'ISLE AND DUDLEY.

## ENGLISH FURNITURE



FIG. 133.—LACQUER CORNER CUPBOARD.  
Height, 7 feet 10 inches; width, 2 feet 7 inches.  
Property of MESSRS. J. MALLETT AND SON.

Buildings, Towers and Steeples, Figures, Rocks and the like according to the Patterns which the best workmen amongst them have afforded us on their cabinets, screens, boxes, etc. Perhaps we have helpt them a little in their proportions, when they were lame or defective, and made them more pleasant yet altogether as antick.'

In fig. 131 a more advanced style and higher finish is perceptible than in the last cabinet. The composition of design on the doors is more truly Oriental, but the detail shows very clearly this cannot be the case; the Chinese dresses of the male figures, with pigtails in combination with the unduly large feet, hairdressing and clothes of the female figures, prove that the artist was but little acquainted with native Chinese and Japanese customs. The colours employed in this lacquer are only black and gold, and the lock-plates and hinges are examples of the best English metal-work of about 1690. The stand is probably the work of a Frenchman domiciled in this country. It was evidently the fashion to place these cabinets on most





## ENGLISH FURNITURE

elaborately carved gilt stands of this character, with sometimes a cornice to match, till nearly the end of the century. The lacquer decoration of this cabinet possesses both artistic merit and excellent imitative qualities.

In letters and diaries of about 1700 constant references to the fascination of japanning infer that the demand was supplied from well-recognised sources. Sir Ralph Thoresby in his diary mentions a visit to 'the ingenious Mr. Lumley, an excellent artist in many respects, paints excellently, japans incomparably, and what I was most pleased with, works mezzo-tint plates.' This proves the art was not confined to Stalker, Parker, and young ladies, but that competent artists made it a profession. The greater portion of lacquer furniture was black, with gold design, but occasionally the ground was an intense red, being composed of Spanish vermilion and Venice lacquer. A fine cabinet of this description is fig. 132, preserved at Penshurst. It is made of oak throughout, the upper portion being surmounted by the bold hooded cornice that was adopted after 1700; the doors are decorated on both sides with large single figures of Chinamen, in gold and black lacquer, with silver faces; the inside is divided into pigeon-holes and compartments above a series of drawers decorated with the more ordinary designs furnished by Stalker and Parker in their book. It may be noticed that at this time the drop-handles of the previous century have given way to a ring-handle and plate, which is engraved, but not yet perforated. The ground of this piece is throughout of a most intense red, with a brilliant surface.

A marked preference for height in cabinets began at this time; the increasing loftiness of the rooms in conjunction with the tall deal wainscot panelling demanded a corresponding feeling in the furniture, and to conceal a certain sense of bareness in the corners of the rooms corner-cupboards were introduced; in these, the highly prized tea-services were kept, used on rare occasions, or when the mistress of the house had her weekly afternoons at home for tea and cards. By the beginning of the century these at-home days had become an institution in ordinary households;

## ENGLISH FURNITURE

this is shown by a letter from Lady Wentworth to her son in 1705, when she writes :—

‘ She and her husband came this afternoon to see me, and Bell and hers, and Peter and his boy, it being my veseting day, and I take the same freedum you gave me when you was hear in making a great show with your tea tables and dishis; but you left but one tea-pott, that is, the little blew and white one, etc.’

Fig. 133 is one of these corner-cupboards in black lacquer, of about 1700; the cornice consists of a broken pediment centring in a small vase; the doors, which are set in a wide framing decorated with sprays of flowers in gold lacquer, are closely covered with a design of figures, ships, birds, and landscapes; a great deal of effect is produced by the contrast between the raised detail of the figures and the flat treatment of the landscape; the hinges are of early type.

Another cabinet of tall and elegant shape is shown in fig. 134; the hooded cornice is formed as a broken pediment with a deep embrasure, the curves in conjunction with those of the looking-glass panels are exceedingly original and graceful; the introduction of a shell and vase as a centre, and the banded ornament on the cornice, are purely European—the rest of the decoration being Oriental in taste. A slide divides the two upper portions, the upper of which opens as a writing-desk surmounting a chest of drawers; all is decorated in very clear and bright lacquer with scenes of Chinese life and the usual landscape. The lock-plates are plain, with ring handles; the date of this cabinet is soon after the accession of Anne.

The passion for lacquer and Eastern objects took a very strong hold upon society, and was continually being stimulated by the sales of curios and Oriental objects held every month at the docks by the East India Company. In 1692 one Edward Hurd petitions the State and sets forth :—

‘ That by his great industry and expense, he has attained and brought to perfection the art of lacquering after the manner of Japan to such a degree of curiosity and



FIG. 134.—LACQUER WRITING-CABINET. Height, 7 feet 9 inches ; length, 3 feet 2 inches ; depth, 1 foot 11 inches. Property of REV. J. O. STEPHENS.





FIG. 135.—LACQUER DOUBLE CHEST OF DRAWERS.  
Length, 5 feet 1 inch; width, 3 feet 4 inches; depth, 2 feet. Property of the VISCOUNTESS WOLSELEY.

## ENGLISH FURNITURE

durableness as to equal any brought from India, and prays for letters patent for the sole use exercise and benefit of the said invention for 14 years.'

In some cases we read that even the wainscots of the rooms were lacquered, and after her first visit to Hampton Court, Celia Fiennes mentions the new fashion :—

'I went to see Hampton Court. Ye old buildings and ye New part. Ye Queen took Great delight in it. Ye new was but just ye shell up and some of ye Roomes of



FIG. 136.—LACQUER LINEN CHEST. Length, 4 feet; height, with stand, 3 feet 8 inches; depth, 1 foot 11 inches. Property of the DUKE OF BEAUFORT.

## ENGLISH FURNITURE

State Ceiled but nothing finished. Beyond this came severall Roomes, and one was pretty Large, at ye four corners were little roomes like drawing roomes, one pannelled all with Jappan, another with Looking Glass, and two with fine work under glass.'

Sometimes this Japan wainscot was low, and the walls hung with the wall-papers that were now being imported from China representing flowers, trees, and exotic birds; but that this importation was also quickly copied here, is shown by the Government grant to William Bayly in November 1691 :—

'For the sole use of his new invention of printing all sorts of papers of all sorts of figures, and colours with several engines made of brass, without paint or stain, which will be useful for hanging in rooms, and which has never been known before.'

This Oriental taste was at its height about 1710, continuing as a fashion for many years. The *Spectator* of February 12, 1712, contains a complaint signed 'Jack Anvil' against his wife, of whom he says :—

'She next set herself to reform every Room of my House, having glazed all my chimney-pieces with Looking glass and planted every corner with such Heaps of China, that I am obliged to move about my own house with the greatest Caution & Circumspection for fear of hurting our brittle Furniture.'

A fine specimen of highly finished lacquer is shown on Plate x. The upper portion opens in two doors on which are representations in gold and red on a black ground of Oriental figures on islands, covered with trees and rocks; these rocks are diapered with fine gold patterns in imitation of the best Japanese lacquer; the cornice is double-hooded in the style of 1700, and surmounted by three finials of vase-shaped form, beneath which an unusual arrangement of arched drawers takes the place of a frieze; the hinges and lock-plates are good examples of English metal-work. The lower portion is formed as a chest of drawers and decorated with the usual plants, birds, and Chinese tea-parties; the feet are original.

Sometimes an attempt was made to introduce an Oriental feeling into the structure of the furniture; this is strongly marked in the lower





PLATE X (AGE OF WALNUT)

LACQUER CABINET

HEIGHT, 7 FEET 1 INCH

BREADTH, 3 " 4 INCHES

DEPTH, 1 FOOT 9 "

PROPERTY OF

C. ASSHETON SMITH, Esq.







## ENGLISH FURNITURE

portion of fig. 135, a double chest of drawers. Here the surface is recessed into deep arch-headed channels; the ground throughout is painted in imitation of red tortoise-shell; the lacquer decoration, which has been retouched, is comparatively flat, and points to a date after the accession of Anne. The form of this piece is unusual, and its nationality is not very clearly defined. Another example of flat lacquer in black and gold is fig. 136, a linen chest of about 1710; it is probably the work of a successful amateur, as the somewhat feeble drawing of the disconnected islands and rocks show very superficial skill in portraying Oriental feeling; the indifferent quality of the lacquer also points to the work of an unprofessional hand. The stand is simple and effective, the deep hollow over the short cabriole leg being most suitable to its low proportion.

It is rare to find English lacquer with the ground of a colour other than black, red, or green, but occasionally a buff ground was introduced to imitate the light sycamore ground of marqueterie. Fig. 137 is a clock-case of this rare lacquer. The design is small and in various colours, the pilasters at the sides being also lacquered. The maker's name is W. Webster, who was working about 1710, which is the date of the case; the top is hooded, a fashion that began on clock-cases about this time. Tall clocks of this period had by now lost the narrow and elegant shape of the former reigns, becoming broader throughout. Many tall clock-cases were made during Anne's reign in the ordinary flat black lacquer, and so many of these are still in existence, that it is unnecessary to give an example.

Marqueterie clock-cases followed the evolution of all other inlaid furniture; early specimens with coloured birds and flowers in panels have already been given in figs. 42 and 43. In the next development, the entire surface was inlaid with flowers in brown and yellow woods, introducing the acanthus, which eventually developed into the fine seaweed pattern without floral decoration. Fig. 138 is of about the date 1690. In this clock-case it will be noticed that the heading is still square and the



FIG. 137.—LACQUER CLOCK.  
Height, 5 feet 8 inches; width at base, 1 foot 6 inches.  
Property of the Rev. J. O. STEPHENS.



FIG. 138.—WALNUT INLAID CLOCK.  
Height, 7 feet 5 inches; width at base, 1 foot 4 inches.  
Property of D. F. WETHERFIELD, Esq.



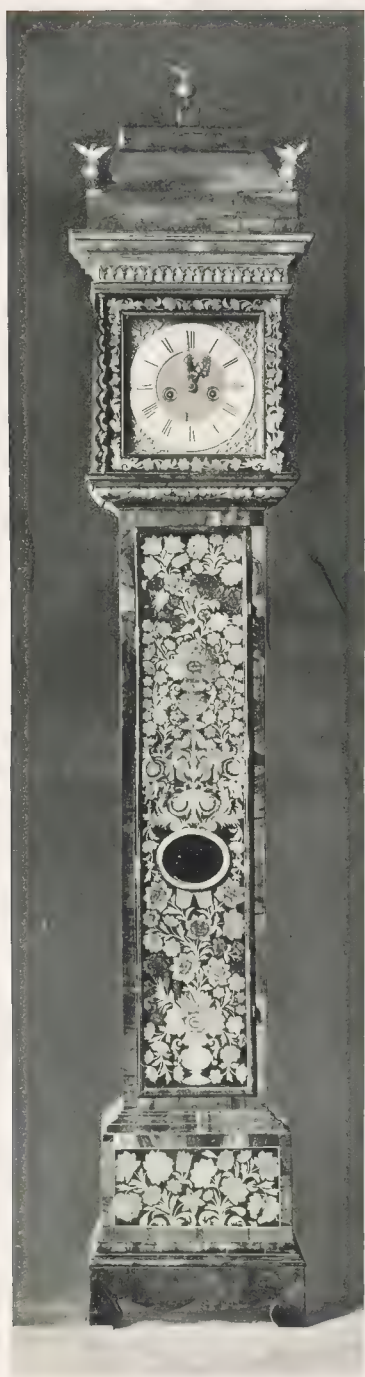


FIG. 139.—WALNUT INLAID CLOCK.  
Height, 7 feet 6 inches.  
Property of S. H. S. LOFTHOUSE, Esq.



FIG. 140.—WALNUT INLAID CLOCK.  
Height, 7 feet 8 inches.  
Property of H. MARTIN GIBBS, Esq.

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waist comparatively narrow; the surface of the case is covered with a floral marqueterie in brown and yellow woods springing from acanthus husks, the sides being also inlaid, a most rare feature in clock-cases. Fig. 139 is of the same character, rather later in date; in this instance the door to the hood is framed by two twisted columns in place of the ordinary straight shafts, the cupola to the hood being an early instance of this feature.

Plate XI. (a) shows what is technically termed a yellow clock; the groundwork being of sycamore inlaid with light brown and black woods; the acanthus pattern of seaweed form combines with a strap-work which breaks up the monotony of the inlay. The maker, Bennett Mansell, was working in 1695, which is about the date of the clock. Fig. 140 is a still finer specimen of these rare yellow clocks, and where greater variety is effected by the introduction of panels of light marqueterie on a dark ground, and further varied by the introduction of small flowers and figures; the same treatment is continued round the framing of the door, and the cupola is also inlaid; the tall proportion and finish of this clock are remarkable. On Plate XI. (b) it may be noticed that the design has become a pattern of finely cut arabesque marqueterie, dark on a light ground, spreading over the surface. The dial in this instance does not belong to the case, which is of about the date 1700. These clock-cases are a sure guide to the chronological arrangement of the different periods of marqueterie, inasmuch as the dials almost invariably have their maker's name, whose dates of entry into the Clockmakers' Company are registered in the Company's records. It must be borne in mind that occasionally these makers were working previous to their date of entry, and that in some instances the dials have been changed; but in a case like the Grocers' clock (fig. 43), where it is known that the dial has never been changed, and where the brass plate bearing the inscription is contemporary with the date of gift, the proof is incontestable.

Marqueterie and lacquer, although in great request from 1685 and





PLATE XI (AGE OF WALNUT

*A*

CLOCK INLAID WITH LIGHT  
MARQUETERIE

HEIGHT, 7 FEET 2 INCHES

PROPERTY OF

PERCY MACQUOID, Esq.

*B*

CLOCK INLAID WITH DARK  
MARQUETERIE

HEIGHT, 7 FEET 9 INCHES

VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM

*C*

WALNUT CHAIR INLAID WITH  
MARQUETERIE

HEIGHT, 3 FEET 3 INCHES

DEPTH OF SEAT, 1 FOOT 3 INCHES

*D*

MIRROR

HEIGHT, 2 FEET

BREADTH, 1 FOOT 5 INCHES







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onwards, was by no means representative of the ordinary class of furniture produced at that time. The demand for plain walnut furniture increased towards the end of the seventeenth century, and a large quantity was consequently made, attractive through simplicity of shape and quiet elegance of design. These objects were a fitting accompaniment to the many small houses of red brick that were now being erected in place of the more romantic-looking but less convenient stone houses of the first half of the century. No doubt the plainness of the furniture was in some measure due to the reduced finances of the nation, impoverished during the greater part of William's and Anne's reigns by wars that not only exhausted the resources of the people, but paralysed trade, the latter being so restricted for a period that the number of self-made merchants of former times who had so ostentatiously and lavishly spent money on furniture and decoration was now greatly reduced. Retrenchment and economy became a necessity among many of the county families, and consequently a certain mediocrity of imagination and general lethargy in art became universal, and with the exception of the few very wealthy landowners, the community was content with less luxurious surroundings. In the middle classes printed calicoes and cottons were substituted for silks, and wall-papers for tapestry and wainscot panelling. In the *Postman* of December 12, 1702, an advertisement is to be found stating that :—

‘At the Blue Paper Warehouse in Aldermanbury (and nowhere else) in London are sold the true sorts of figured Paper Hangings, some in pieces of twelve yards long, others after the manner of real tapestry, others in imitation of Irish stitch, flowered Damasks, Sprigs and Branches, others yard wide, in imitation of marble and other coloured wainscoats, others in yard wide Embossed work, and a curious sort of Flock work in imitation of Caffaws, and other hangings of curious figures and colours.’

Another advertisement in the next year mentions :—

‘Imitations of Marbles and other coloured Wainscoats, which are to be put in Panels and Mouldings made for that purpose, fit for the Hangings of Parlours, Dining Rooms and staircases ; and others in yard wide Embossed work in imitation of gilded Leather.’

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The older hangings were, however, still marketable commodities in 1704, as an advertisement of this date in the same journal mentions :—

‘Three suites of Hangings, one of Forrest Tapestry, one of clouded Camlet, and one of blue Printed Linsey; the first two very good, scarce the worse for wearing, to be sold very reasonable.’

Wall-papers were used in the bedrooms of the larger houses and in the



FIG. 141.—WALNUT CABINET. Height, 5 feet 2 inches; width, 3 feet 4 inches; depth, 1 foot 6 inches. Property of MESSRS. MORANT.

## ENGLISH FURNITURE

dining-rooms and parlours of the smaller houses, that were being built early in the century on the outskirts of London and other large towns, and in which, doubtless, so much of the smaller pieces of walnut furniture were used. Macky, in his *Journal through England* at this period, notes that :—

‘ About two miles from Wanstead in my way to London, is a large village called Stratford, where there are about two hundred little country houses for the conveniency of the Citizens in Summer ; where their Wives and Children generally keep, and their Husbands come down on Saturdays and return on Mondays.’



FIG. 142.—WALNUT CABINET. Height, 4 feet 9 inches ; width, 2 feet 10 inches ; depth, 1 foot 6 inches. Property of MESSRS. MORANT.



## ENGLISH FURNITURE

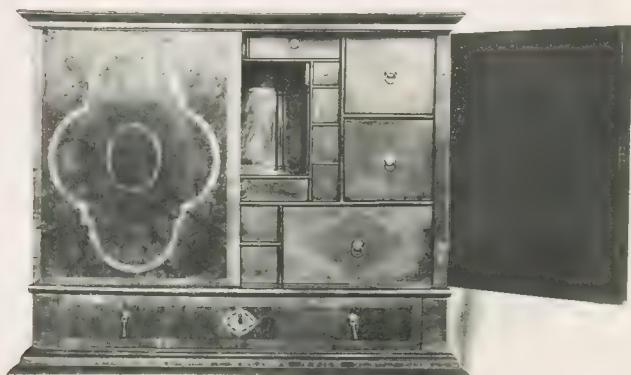


FIG. 143.—OUTSIDE—SAME (FIG. 142).

The quotation is interesting, as it proves the Saturday till Monday out of town was a fashion in existence two hundred years ago, and that the dangers of the road were braved for those week-end trips.

Fig. 141, a cabinet with a stand, is an early example of high-class simple walnut furniture; the doors are veneered in oyster-pieces of walnut, with a lighter border of the same wood; the drawers are faced in a similar manner, but edged with a chequer of holly and ebony; the ogeed line of the frieze is unusual, but resembles that on the frame of table (fig. 81). The handles are of the star and drop pattern so prevalent at this time, and the legs of the stand are composed of a twist, and centre in a ball in the fashion of 1688, approximately the date of the cabinet. Fig. 142 is a few years later; it has no frieze, and the walnut veneer is cut on the straight, the outside of the doors (fig. 143) being inlaid with oyster-pieces; the legs of the stand have a more open twist than the last specimen, and centre in an oval. These two pieces of furniture are very representative of the inexpensive type of cabinet used before 1700.

A favourite form of simple decorative furniture at this time was the chest of drawers mounted on a high stand such as fig. 144. Here the frieze is divided into a flat and an ovolo member surmounting drawers,



FIG. 144. WALNUT CHEST OF DRAWERS ON STAND. Height, 5 feet 2 inches; width, 3 feet; depth, 1 foot 7 inches. Property of HENRY HUXLEY, Esq.



FIG. 145.—WALNUT CHEST OF DRAWERS ON STAND. Height, 6 feet; length, 3 feet 7 inches; depth, 2 feet. Property of the VISCOUNTESS WOLSELEY.



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which are inlaid with a line of lighter wood ; the stand, containing three drawers, is of oak and divided into arched compartments ; the legs are of walnut, cupped and turned in the manner of 1690, and rest upon large bun-feet. Another of these chests of drawers and stand, veneered throughout in walnut, is fig. 145, of about the date 1698. The top is hooded with a bold cornice moulding, which is somewhat out of proportion and disconnected with other parts of the piece, no use being made of the flat surfaces immediately below this cornice ; the upper portion is divided into two parts, and no decoration is attempted save a cross-banding of walnut ; the stand contains three drawers, and the arches of both this and the last cabinet are edged with a narrow fillet moulding, very typical of walnut furniture towards the end of the century, and the twisted legs are united by a slightly waved stretcher.

A writing-cabinet of rare shape is given in fig. 146 ; the light hooded cornice is surmounted by three vase-shaped finials ; the upper portion opens in two doors, bordered with a broad cross-banding of walnut, this edging being repeated on the writing-flap ; the cupped legs in conjunction with the tall proportions of this piece give it great originality. Fig. 147 is an ordinary writing-cabinet of about 1700, preserved at

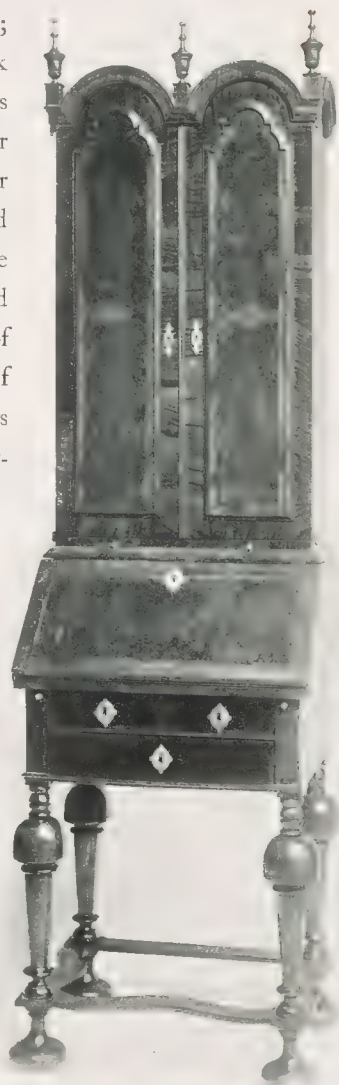


FIG. 146.—WALNUT WRITING-CABINET.  
Height, 6 feet 9 inches ; width, 1 foot 10 inches ;  
depth, 1 foot 6 inches. Property of C. ASSHETON SMITH, Esq.



FIG. 147.—WALNUT WRITING-CABINET. Property of the DUKE OF MARLBOROUGH.

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Blenheim ; the cupboard and cornice repeat the design of the preceding piece on somewhat heavier lines, the portion underneath the writing-flap being formed as a chest of drawers ; the veneer is a mixture of oyster-pieces and plain walnut cut on the straight ; the hinges overlap the doors and relieve the monotony of the plain uprights ; the handle-plates on the two lower drawers are original, those perforated being of later make. Fig. 148 is a knee-hole writing-desk ; it is veneered in plain walnut and supported on six legs, which taper towards the base and end in the usual feet, connected by a plain stretcher centring in a semicircle.

The double chest of drawers was a favourite piece of furniture in bedrooms from the beginning of the eighteenth century. Fig. 149 is an early example, surmounted by the curved and broken pediment with finials that began in William's reign, although the chamfered and channelled edges, the original open lock and handle-plates, distinctly point to about the date 1710. The centre of the semi-circular frieze is inlaid with a cross and square in dark wood on a shield of lighter ground ; the face of the piece is veneered in burr walnut, each drawer being bordered with a cross-banding of the same wood.

Cupboards, with glazed and mullioned doors for the display of china, were much in use at this time, some hooded like the writing-cabinets, others with straight tops as on the bookcases. We



FIG. 148.—WALNUT WRITING-DESK.  
Property of the HON. CHARLOTTE MARIA LADY NORTH  
and R. EDEN DICKSON, Esq.





FIG. 149.—WALNUT DOUBLE CHEST OF DRAWERS.  
Height, 6 feet 4 inches; width, 3 feet 2 inches; depth, 1 foot 9 inches. Property of S. H. S. LOFTHOUSE, Esq.

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read that Queen Mary had employed the services of Johnstone, who was the best cabinet-maker of that time, to make different varieties of these cupboards for her collection of china and Delft ware. Fig. 150 is of about



FIG. 150.—WALNUT CHINA CUPBOARD. Height, 6 feet 6 inches; width, 4 feet; depth, 1 foot 2 inches. Property of the HON. CHARLOTTE MARIA LADY NORTH and R. EDEN DICKSON, Esq.

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the date 1690, and resembles the rather earlier specimen given in fig. 19, but the difference is clearly marked in the solid construction of the lower portion resting upon ball-feet, in the place of the Carolean stand and stretcher; the frames to the doors are cross-banded in walnut, and the



FIG. 151.—WALNUT CHINA CABINET. Height, 7 feet 10 inches; width, 5 feet 10 inches; depth, 1 foot 6 inches. Property of the VISCOUNTESS WOLSELEY.





FIG. 152.—WALNUT AND YEW DRESSING-TABLE. Property of FRANK GREEN, Esq.



FIG. 153.—WALNUT DRESSING-TABLE. Height, 2 feet 8 inches; length, 3 feet 4 inches.  
Property of C. E. KEMPE, Esq.

## ENGLISH FURNITURE

original crystal cut glass is contained in walnut mullions of a simple half-round moulding. Fig. 151 is a china cupboard of rather different construction, some twenty-five years later in date, with larger sized panels than in the preceding specimen, and bordered with a narrow gilt acanthus moulding. Many of these china cabinets were later converted into bookcases.



FIG. 154.—WALNUT LOOKING-GLASS.  
Property of the VISCOUNTESS WOLSELEY.



FIG. 155.—WALNUT LOOKING-GLASS.  
Property of the REV. J. O. STEPHENS.



FIG. 156.—OAK TABLE. Height, 2 feet 4 inches; width, 2 feet 2 inches; depth, 1 foot 6 inches.



FIG. 157.—WALNUT SIDE-TABLE.

Property of the HON. CHARLOTTE MARIA LADY NORTH and R. EDEN DICKSON, Esq.



## ENGLISH FURNITURE

Much plain bedroom furniture, such as chests of drawers, dressing and other tables, was made towards the end of the century. Fig. 152 represents the type of dressing-table much in use about 1690; the arched and cusped finish to the lower portion of the frame is bordered with a narrow fillet; the long pendants carry out the graceful proportions of the cupped legs which are turned in yew, the serpentine stretcher being walnut. Fig. 153 is a larger dressing-table of the same type and date,



FIG. 158.—WALNUT TABLE. Height, 2 feet 5 inches; width of top, 2 feet 7 inches by 2 feet 2 inches. Property of C. E. KEMPE, Esq.

## ENGLISH FURNITURE

somewhat sturdier in design, made throughout in walnut and bordered round the drawers with a herring-bone inlay of the same wood, a knee-hole space being left in the centre; the legs are six in number, united by an undulating stretcher. Fig. 154 shows one of the looking-glasses constructed to stand on these tables, a few years later in date; a flat heading is introduced in conjunction with the curves of a moulding peculiar to the end of the century; it has the original bevelled glass, but the ball-feet are restorations. Fig. 155 is another of these looking-glasses, made towards the end of Anne's reign; the mirror here is framed in a gilt and carved border of low relief, mounted on a double tier of small drawers. Occasionally these dressing-tables and mirrors are found of lacquer, to match other furniture.

Sometimes in tables the cup-shaped leg was elaborately balustered; this is the case in fig. 156, a small oak table made towards the end of William's reign, for the occasional reproduction in oak of fashionable walnut forms in tables, chairs, chests of drawers, and cabinets always continued, their rarity being probably due to individual preference for this wood, or to country origin. Long oak dining-tables still continued to be made; a specimen, dated 1697, has already been given in fig. 177 in 'The Age of Oak.' In the more modern and fashionable dining-rooms, oval and folding oak or walnut tables were often used; this can be proved by reference to prints of the time. Small walnut side-tables, with either marble or wooden tops, such as fig. 157, came into fashion about 1700 in place of the somewhat cumbersome buffets and court cupboards, and the silver-plate originally displayed on these was now placed on the dining-tables. The so-called sideboard, as we now understand the term, was not developed until the middle of the century, and as neither knives nor spoons were changed, forks rare, and the food was placed in rotation on the table, no necessity for much side service existed until Georgian times. Another form of side-table is fig. 158, which could be converted into a round shape by swinging legs on the movable back stretcher. It

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is of walnut throughout; the legs are of uncommon design, being of spindle form in octagon; they finish in feet that move on pivots approximating the construction of a castor, an invention that was certainly in use at this time, and can be seen on the walnut baby-trotter (fig. 159), which is of about the date 1700. In this interesting piece, a portion of the upper ring opens to admit the child, and can be closed by a hook and eye; the lower portion is supported on six large wooden castors, working on movable pins.



FIG. 159.—WALNUT BABY-TROTTER. Property of E. A. BARRY, Esq.



## CHAPTER VII



THE characteristics of important upholstered beds after the reign of Charles II. were the elaborate mouldings and ornaments to the cornices and testers, the sometimes excessive height of structure, and the comparative absence of ornate tasselled fringes. The hangings up till this time had principally consisted of silk damasks, plain velvets embroidered in silks and gold thread, or of needlework tapestry. During the reigns of William and Anne, the hangings were sometimes composed of chintz, but mostly of figured velvets or damasks trimmed with galon. Embroidered bed-hangings, though exceptional, evidently still continued to be occasionally bought and sold, and were highly esteemed. In 1704 a bed is advertised in the *Postman* as 'a prize in a lottery by Her Majesty's permission,' though it does not follow that the make of this bed is exactly contemporary with the notice.

'A Rich Bed, seven foot broad, eight foot long and about fourteen feet high in which no less than Two Thousand ounces of gold and silver, wrought in it containing four curtains embroidered on both sides alike on a white silk Tabby; Three Vallains with tassels, three Basses, two Bonegraces and four Cantoneers Embroidered on gold Tissue Cloth, cost £3000, put up at £1400.'

Basses were the ground valances; bonegraces (a French invention, from the word *bonnegrace*—a form of head-covering) were narrow fixed curtains that did not draw, closing the opening between the side-curtains and back of a bed, in order to protect the head from draughts. Cantonnières were narrow embroidered bands that hung from pendants, uniting the corners of the top valances outside the curtains, and performed the same office of protection and seclusion when the latter were drawn at

## ENGLISH FURNITURE

the foot of the bed; it was therefore desirable to have height in a bed of this kind, not only on account of its appearance in the new lofty rooms, but also to avoid the asphyxiation of the occupant. These lofty rooms must have been extremely cold; the bedrooms up to Carolean times had been comparatively small and invariably low, but with the new style of building the size of the windows much increased, while the appliances for warming the rooms decreased, a small hearth-basket or tray, of what was then called sea-coal, being substituted for the roaring wood fires of earlier times.

The half-tester open bedstead, adopted from the shape called 'Duchesse' in France, received but little favour here, and consequently specimens of this style, which are alluded to by Celia Fiennes and other writers of that time, 'as half tester beds in the new mode,' or 'à la moderne,' are almost impossible to find. Other simple forms, such as truckle and turn-up bedsteads, existed, used by the less important members of a household, but examples of these have also practically disappeared. In a letter of Isabella, Lady Wentworth, to her son, Lord Raby, dated January 2, 1711, there is an allusion to one of these turn-up bedsteads, and complaints about the temperature of the tall rooms of that time.

'My dearist and best of children, Did I not tell you of the Queen's great loss? She had a dog shut up in a turn up bed and soe smothered. The Queen is better natured than I for sartainly I would have put away those that did it. . . . It is bitter cold in any roome but this, and this comfortable warme, but your lodgings ar excessif cold, the roomes soe large and soe high if the fyer be never soe great one syde freesis while the other burns.'

Oak bedsteads, even amongst people of quality, were still in use in Anne's reign, and in another letter written by Lady Wentworth in 1705, she mentions that :—

'Our bedsteads being old and craysy, just as Betty stept into bed broak all to peesis; it cannot be mended I hope you will order Mr. Elleson to gett a new one.'



FIG. 160.—UPHOLSTERED BED. Height, 9 feet 8 inches ; length, 6 feet 8 inches ; width, 5 feet 9 inches.  
Property of SIR ALGERNON K. B. OSBORN, Bart.



## ENGLISH FURNITURE

A few days later she writes to the same person :—

‘I have gott my bedstead mended, In my last I was afraid it could not be dun.’

Chintz had no doubt in many instances, by the beginning of the eighteenth century, replaced the ordinary hangings to oak bedsteads, and Swift, writing in 1712, and satirising the taste for things Oriental, mentions how a country squire from ‘being a foul feeder grew dainty : how he longed for Mangos, Spices, and Indian Birds’ Nests, etc., and could not sleep but in a Chintz Bed.’

The bed (fig. 160), unfortunately somewhat mutilated, is connected with a very important event in English history—the birth of James Francis Edward Stuart—afterwards known as the Old Pretender, the youngest son of James II. and his second wife, Mary Beatrice D’Este. The tester cornice, which has lost its top ornaments, shows the commencement of the scrolled and corbelled corners of carved wood, that in four or five years became so prominent a feature on these state beds. The material on the cornice is closely glued to the mouldings, and with the hangings and valances is of fine figured velvet, of English make, dark blue, green, crimson, and salmon on a deep cream ground ; the fringe is modern. The ceiling of the tester is untouched, and composed of canary-coloured satin, strained on simple architectural mouldings ; the satin of the back has been renewed, and certain portions of the embroidery with which it was probably entirely covered, re-applied ; the swags of flowers are of the highly raised original embroidery, in pale green and silver, the central and upright panel of ornament being still upon its original canary-satin ground ; the ciphers on each side of this under small crowns are those of James II., whilst immediately over the centre pillow, and surrounded by fragments of original embroidery, is a cipher containing the initials of the unfortunate Queen to whom the bed belonged. The scrolling of the pillow-heading, which has been re-covered, is strongly pronounced in the newest fashion of that time, and the padded



FIG. 161.—UPHOLSTERED BEDS. (a) Height, 16 feet; length, 8 feet; width, 6 feet 4 inches.  
 (b) Height, 8 feet 6 inches; length, 7 feet; width, 4 feet 1 inch. HAMPTON COURT PALACE.

## ENGLISH FURNITURE

quilt and quilted pillows have their original covering of cream satin. James Francis Edward, who for so long made pretensions to the British throne, was born in St. James's Palace in this bed, on June 10, 1688. The interesting details of this event are described at length by Burnet, who leans strongly towards the supposition of a fraudulent birth; and the tradition of the introduction of a newly born child into the room through the medium of a warming-pan is in some measure due to his statements. This most interesting, though much restored, bed is now at Chicksands Priory; on the abdication of King James it became the perquisite of the Lord Chamberlain, by whom it was given to an ancestor of the present owner.

The next example in this series of beds is fig. 161 (*a*), five or six years later in date, and used by William III., James's nephew and usurper of his throne; it is now placed in one of the small dining-rooms at Hampton Court Palace. The height of this magnificent bed is sixteen feet, and the almost total disappearance of the curtains (their remnants being tied to the posts) adds to the loftiness of its appearance. The cornice consists of a series of fantastic scrolls supported by corbels at the centres and corners, with large vase-shaped finials of elaborate form, from which the plumes have been removed; the ceiling of the tester is dome-shaped and matches the cornice in design; the double valances are bordered with a broad galon, and meet at the corners in scrolled projections, from which the cantonnières (now missing) hung; the pillow-heading is elaborately carved in scrolls and finials. The whole of the wood-work is covered in brilliant rose damask of English make, finished with a galon trimming, the curtains, valances, and back being all to match; the bonegraces, whose uses have already been explained, are still left hanging; the feet are splayed, scrolled, and covered with the damask. Some notion can be obtained of the arrangement of the bedding in those days by the inspection of these mattresses and quilts that are covered in their original cream satin, with green and red button-tufts; the long bolster is also covered with the same





PLATE XII (AGE OF WALNUT)  
UPHOLSTERED BED

HEIGHT, 19 FEET 6 INCHES  
DEPTH, 8 FEET 3   "  
LENGTH, 7   "

HAMPTON COURT PALACE







## ENGLISH FURNITURE

cream satin. By the side of this tall state bed made for so short a man, a small bed (*b*), used by George II., is shown, on which the inner leather covering to the feather mattresses can be seen, the satin having been removed.

A bed similar in construction and taste to that of William III.'s, but from which the vase-shaped finials have been removed, is fig. 162, preserved at Hardwick. The cornice is carved in the same manner, but here pendants form the corners; the scrolls that held the cantonnières are also of carved wood, covered with rose-coloured damask with which the entire bed is upholstered, the trimming on the escalated valances being bordered with a broad rose galon; the bonegraces, which can be seen where the back meets the sides, are decorated with one straight line of galon; the panel of silk immediately above the pillows is a restoration, and the quilt is comparatively modern. This bed is of about the date 1690, at which time the galon-scolled trimming, centring in buttons, began to take the place of elaborate fringes on upholstered furniture.

The lavish expenditure that continued in the decoration of important beds shows that these still held the position of former times, and although it was no longer the fashion in England for men of high position to give audience in bed, ladies of quality still received in this manner, and royal beds were both in England and France guarded with especial precautions. In 1694 the Marquis de Dangeau mentions in his diary, that the Queen of England 'receives the Court whilst on her bed.' Here he refers to Mary Beatrice D'Este at St. Germain. In the *État de France* of 1694, there are interesting directions for the protection of royal beds, and the appointment of ladies of the bedchamber for the Queen, in place of the valets who had hitherto sat within the rails to guard the bed during the day, and these directions are stated to be founded on English Court ordinances of the time.

Plate XII. shows another of these royal beds made for Queen Anne. The cornice is comparatively simple, surmounted by vase-shaped finials covered in velvet, and the double valances are straight; the whole bed is



FIG. 102.—UPHOLSTERED BED. Height, 13 feet; length, 7 feet; width, 6 feet.  
Property of the DUKE OF DEVONSHIRE.





FIG. 163. UPHOLSTERED BED. Height, 13 feet; length, 7 feet; width, 6 feet.  
Property of the DUKE OF DEVONSHIRE.



FIG. 164.—UPHOLSTERED BED. Height, 13 feet. Property of the DUKE OF DEVONSHIRE.

## ENGLISH FURNITURE

upholstered in a richly patterned velvet of English make, and by tradition the product of Spitalfields looms ; it is tawny, olive green, and claret on a cream ground ; the curtains are lined with cream satin, and the two mattresses, quilts, and bolster still in existence are covered with the same material. No fringe or galon is used in the decoration of this bed, and its appearance therefore is somewhat bare.

Fig. 163 is a bed of about 1710, upholstered throughout in a beautiful figured velvet, olive green and rose on a cream ground ; the cornice consists of simple mouldings which rise at the centres and form broken pediments enclosing ducal crowns ; the valances are straight and trimmed with an early eighteenth-century fringe repeated on the curtains, all lined with sea-green satin ; the ceiling of the tester is an elaborate design of carved scrolls covered with velvet and satin ; the back has been re-covered, but possesses the original carved double escallop shells covered with velvet above a ducal crown worked in gold and silks ; on either side are carved sprays of rush-leaved ornament covered in cream satin ; at the corners of the cornice may be noticed the escallop shell again introduced, a favourite novelty in ornament at that time.

Fig. 164 is a bed, a little later in date, also preserved at Hardwick, and covered throughout in a patterned velvet of English make—green on a paler ground of the same colour ; the cornice is here serpentine in outline and lighter in character than on the preceding beds. The top member is composed of a carved spiral nulling, centring and cornering in escallop shells most skilfully covered with the velvet ; the valances follow the lines of the cornice, and are trimmed with a fringe similar to that used on the last bed ; the back is composed of the velvet without any ornamentation. The number of these magnificent beds of the same period existing at Hardwick proves that in a rich household this quality of bed was still predominant, for in addition to these given, there are many others ; a large state bed also has been removed and another broken up to form a canopy in the long gallery.





FIG. 165. WALNUT BED.  
Property of the HON. CHARLOTTE MARIA LADY NORTH and R. EDEN DICKSON, Esq.



FIG 166.—UPHOLSTERED BED. Height, 9 feet 6 inches; length, 6 feet.  
Property of SIR SPENCER C. PONSONBY FANE.

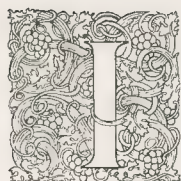
## ENGLISH FURNITURE

It has been shown that, from about 1625 till 1700, the posts of important and fashionable beds were slender, octagonal, or round in form, and covered with material; at the latter date this was discarded and the wood left bare, generally fluted on the upper portion, and finishing towards the end of Anne's reign in walnut legs of cabriole form.

Fig. 165 is a wooden bed of about 1710, with plain fluted posts, and it probably represents an isolated example of individual taste, perhaps copied from a French bed. The entire construction is of walnut, and the plain cornice is supported by a double frieze, carved and gilt with an early eighteenth-century design forming a valance-box to the curtains. The back is in four large panels, with gilt mouldings and applied pateræ of a sun and stars; the legs are of spindle form, and terminate in small bun-feet; the hangings, etc., are of later date. These fluted columns are again shown on the bed (fig. 166) in which Queen Anne slept on the occasion of her visit to Brympton. The height is comparatively low, and the whole construction shows simplicity and elegance; the scalloped and nulled cornice upon which the damask is tightly strained foreshadows in its form and projecting corners some of the coming characteristics of the later eighteenth-century beds. The perforated and open vases are relics of the ostrich plumes which by this time ceased to be in request; this same form can be seen on the vase-shaped finials to the gate-posts of the entrance to the Orangery at Kensington Palace. The valances are shaped, somewhat resembling in line those of the walnut bed (fig. 165); they are trimmed with a simple fringe and pleated at the corners like the contemporary coat-tails; the carved pillow-heading, also covered in damask, is of bold scrolling; the legs are of cabriole form, carved on the knee and foot with the decoration of the time; the bed is entirely covered with red rose damask of English design and manufacture, the hangings of the room and window curtains being all to match.



## CHAPTER VIII



IT has been necessary to defer the definite introduction and description of the cabriole leg until now, although suggestions of its appearance in furniture have already been shown. So long as the backs of chairs remained comparatively rectangular, a distinctly curved leg was not considered necessary to carry out the design, but with the accession of William III. a great change took place in chairs, and the fashion for a shorter back of hooped form with cabriole legs was introduced, presumably from Holland; this fashion ran contemporaneously with the tall and narrow cane-backed chairs, but being more convenient for meals and more comfortable to the sitter, eventually superseded the older type and formed the pattern for the later developments of the eighteenth-century chair.

The feet to these cabriole legs were first of scroll form as in tall-back caned chairs, then the scroll formed the fetlock-joint to a hoof-shaped foot, taken from the French *pied-de-biche*, but this soon lost its hoof form in a square and slightly spreading foot, and finally developed into the well-known club-foot of Anne and George I. The light curved form of this cabriole leg was accompanied by a similar treatment in the design of the back, a curve being introduced into its uprights, the splat assuming the shape known as fiddle-back.

In fig. 167, of about 1687, the cresting retains the feeling of the contemporary tall cane-backed chairs, the uprights are curved, and the splat is perforated and richly carved in the manner of fig. 96, but suggesting the fiddle shape; the front of the seat droops in curved form and is united as in earlier chairs, by cappings to the cabriole legs; these are

## ENGLISH FURNITURE

carved on the shoulders with floral pendants and finish in scrolls on slightly splayed feet ; the front stretcher is recessed and of Carolean character ; the back legs, as in nearly all early chairs of this type, are of scrolled form, finishing on square bases. This chair was probably originally covered in needlework. Fig. 168 is the next development of this new shape. Here the back is somewhat shorter and the cresting more simple than in the preceding specimens ; the splat is more solid, but perforated in the centre with fine carving ; the uprights are curved, but break at a sharp angle below the centre ; the cabriole legs project in small curves on the inner side, a feature that continued for some years, and the feet are of hoof form ; the rising stretcher is still Carolean. This chair is one of a set at Hampton Court Palace, and is covered with the original needlework tapestry made by Queen Mary and her ladies-in-waiting. Fig. 169 is one from a pair at Berkeley Castle, the treatment of the back being similar to that pursued in the last chair, except that the carving is rather more elaborate, the simple cabriole legs finish in hoofed feet, and the evolution of the scroll into the pastern of the hoof is clearly perceptible ; the stretcher is flat, resembling that found on stools of about 1695, and the seat is covered with its original needlework. Genuine specimens of these hooped-backed chairs, with carved and perforated splats, are rare ; they were made originally for the wealthy classes, being very expensive in manufacture, and by the time the demand for this shape became more general, much carving on the perforation of the splats was out of fashion. Fig. 170 is contemporary with these specimens, and the general outline is of similar shape ; the cresting is far more elaborate and earlier in intention ; the back is caned, and was probably originally gilt ; the front rail of the seat droops, and is in the style of the back ; the legs finish in scroll-feet. Another variety, with a tall cane back, of about the date 1700, is fig. 171 ; the cresting is simple but elegant in design, the uprights are straight, with a bold moulding that is continued in curved form on the lower rail of the back ; the caning bears traces of the original gilding, and the legs



FIG. 167.—WALNUT CHAIR.  
Property of R. W. PARTRIDGE, Esq.



FIG. 168.—WALNUT CHAIR.  
HAMPTON COURT PALACE.



## ENGLISH FURNITURE

terminate in the divided hoof form known as *pied-de-biche*; the back legs are scrolled, and finish in square plinths.



FIG. 169.—WALNUT CHAIR.  
Property of LORD FITZHARDINGE.

It may be noticed that up to this time the seat-rails to chairs were square-cornered, but soon after 1700 these corners became altered in character by the high cresting to the leg, the design of which was sometimes repeated in the middle of the front rail. In fig. 172, of about the date 1709, the back is straight and upholstered; the legs show the curved cresting forming the corners of the seat, these finish in square club-feet, suggesting the hoof, in which the fetlock-joint is still perceptible; the edges and carved ornaments are gilt, the pendant on the front rail is broken. This example is one from a large set at Houghton in Norfolk, comprising chairs, stools, and sofas; they are all covered in deep emerald-green velvet, trimmed with silver galon, and precede the building of the great house by about twenty years.

## ENGLISH FURNITURE

Fig. 173 is a chair from a suite of almost similar type from Glemham, but of more elaborate finish and decoration, the wood-work being entirely gilt and carved at the knees with bold cabochons surmounted by feathered trefoils; the feet are carved with acanthus. The seat and back of this chair are upholstered in rose damask of a later date, and in order

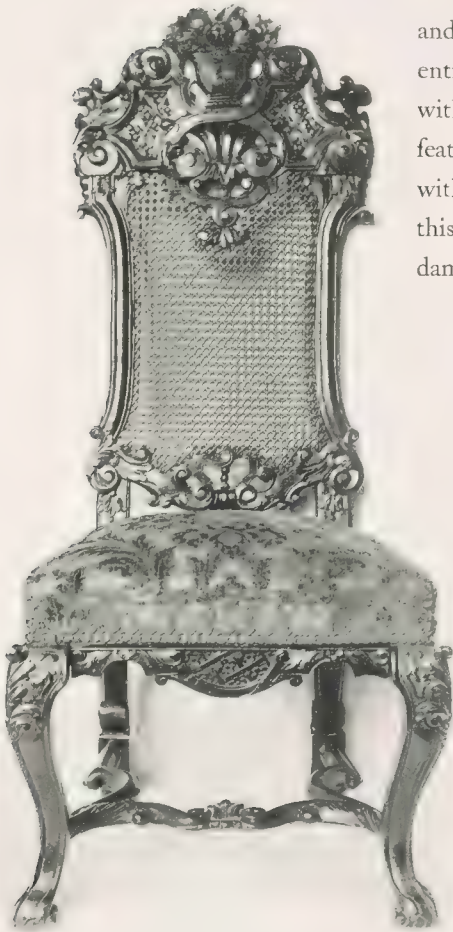


FIG. 170.—WALNUT CHAIR.  
Property of the EARL OF CARRINGTON.

to show the material with which this entire suite was originally covered, a stool (fig. 174) and one of the double chairs or love-seats (fig. 175) are also

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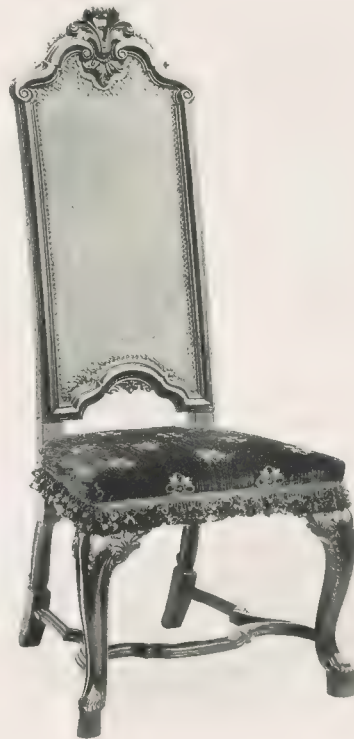


FIG. 171.—WALNUT CHAIR. Height, 4 feet 3 inches.  
Property of S. CAMPBELL CORY, Esq.

## ENGLISH FURNITURE



FIG. 172.—WALNUT AND GILT UPHOLSTERED CHAIR. Property of the MARQUESS OF CHOLMONDELEY.

an extent, that he was obliged to move it to his country-seat, Glemham, where it has since remained. In the love-seat, the arms curve outwardly and droop slightly; the upholstery of these specimens is in a remarkable state of preservation, the silver ground alone having tarnished in colour.

given. This material consists of a patterned cloth of gold, on a silver ground, through which run brilliant coral lines of satin; the trimming is a silver galon; when new it must have been most brilliant, and was evidently highly treasured by its first owner, Lord North, as we read in a contemporary letter, that he complains of the smoke from the chimneys of the Goldsmiths' Company injuring his new furniture to such



FIG. 173.—WALNUT CHAIR, GILT. Property of the HON. CHARLOTTE MARIA LADY NORTH and R. EDEN DICKSON, Esq.





FIG. 174.—GILT WALNUT UPHOLSTERED LOVE-SEAT. Height, 3 feet 6 inches ; width, 3 feet 3 inches. Property of the HON. CHARLOTTE MARIA LADY NORTH and R. EDEN DICKSON, Esq.



FIG. 175.—GILT WALNUT UPHOLSTERED STOOL. Height, 1 foot 5 inches ; length, 2 feet ; width, 1 foot 3 inches. Property of the HON. CHARLOTTE MARIA LADY NORTH and R. EDEN DICKSON, Esq.

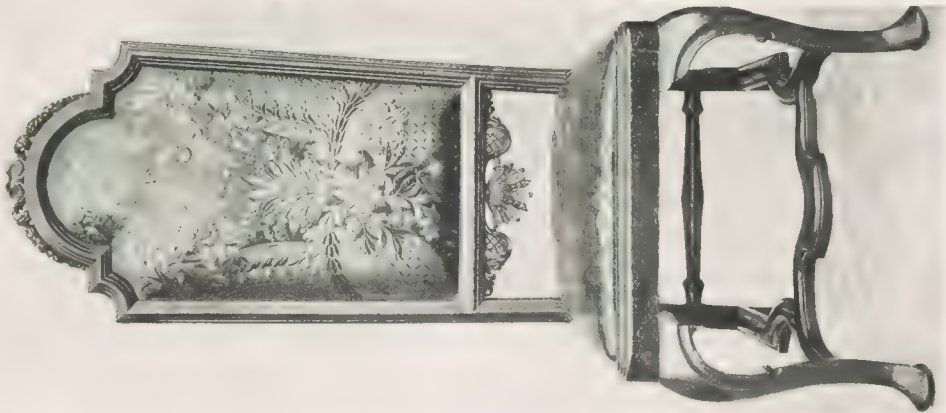


FIG. 176.—RED LACQUER AND LEATHER CHAIR, Height, 4 feet 7 inches. Property of the DUCHESS OF BEAUFORT.

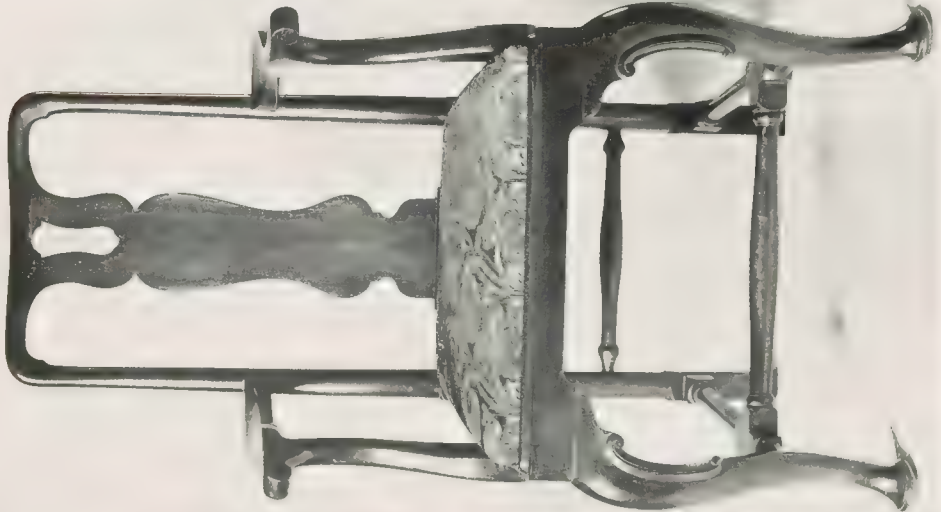


FIG. 178.—WALNUT ARM-CHAIR. Property of GUY LAKING, Esq.

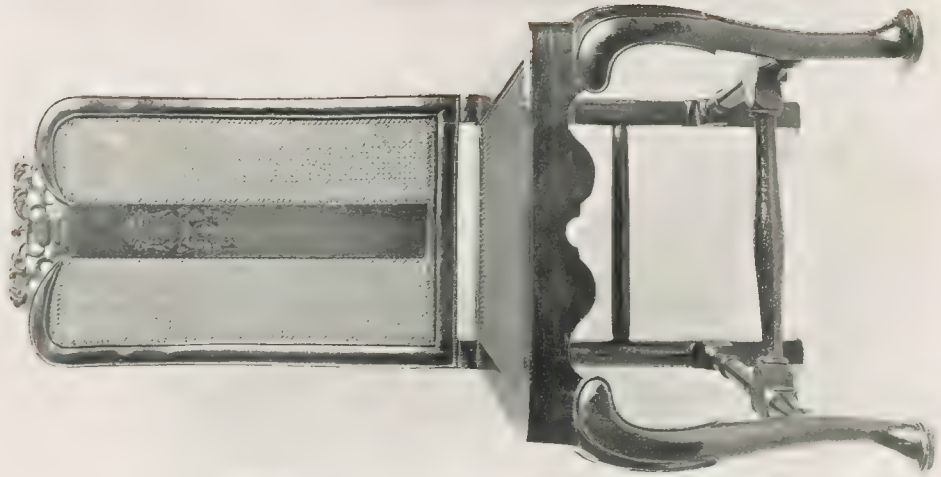


FIG. 177.—WALNUT INLAID CHAIR. Height, 3 feet 7 inches.



FIG. 180.—WALNUT INLAID CHAIR.  
Height, 3 feet 7 inches.  
Property of S. CAMPBELL CURRY, Esq.

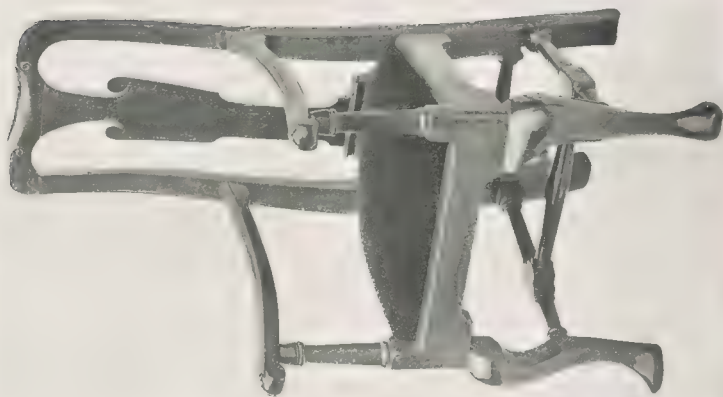


FIG. 179.—WALNUT CHILD'S CHAIR.  
Height, 2 feet 4 inches; width, 1 foot 1 inch.  
Property of ROBERT W. J. RUSHBROOKE, Esq.



FIG. 181.—WALNUT INLAID CHAIR.  
Height, 3 feet 6 inches.  
Property of C. ASHETON SMITH, Esq.



## ENGLISH FURNITURE

Fig. 176 is an interesting red lacquer chair, one of a set, of the first years of Anne. The width of the back increasing towards the top, the combination of the scarlet lacquer with the red and gold Cordova stamped leather, are most unusual; this leather is neatly strained with the original small gilt nails on a frame seat sunk in a rebate moulding, and the decorative effect is remarkable; the legs, of simple cabriole form, finish in round club-feet, the final evolution from the scroll and hoof.

Early hoop-back chairs (such as fig. 167), in spite of the money evidently lavished upon them, were slow in obtaining favour. The sentiment of the tall-back chair can still be traced in fig. 177, one of a set, of about 1705. The cresting with the traditional vase and foliage has almost disappeared, but in the splat that divides the caning of the back, a cartouche of late marqueterie is introduced; the lines of the back are curved, and the lower edge of the seat-rail, and the long cabriole legs ending in club-feet, carry out the graceful lines of this back. The caning, which at this period became excessively fine, is original, and the stretchers still show a link with the chairs of the preceding century. The same sentiment of form is preserved in fig. 178, which is without caning, and the shaped splat is treated plainly like the rest of the chair; the arms have an outward lateral curve instead of what has hitherto been vertical; the seat is loose, framed in a rebate moulding. A baby-chair on the same lines is shown in fig. 179, but the reduced proportions make the back and legs somewhat clumsy. Fig. 180 is a chair with the splat enlivened by a panel of marqueterie again repeated on the seat-rail; the stretchers, now about to disappear, resemble the preceding specimens, and fix the date as early in the century. In the beautiful chair, one of a set (fig. 181), this departure is shown; the increasing width and strength of the shoulder of the cabriole leg at its union with the seat-rail was evidently called forth by this abolition, and the back legs became club-footed, and more in accordance with those of the front, and it may be taken as a general rule that, when back legs are found of this type and

## ENGLISH FURNITURE

without a stretcher, the chair is after the date 1708. In this instance marqueterie decorates the splat, seat-rail, head of the hoop, and knees of the legs; the front feet take the form of little shoes; the date of this chair is about 1708. Another chair of almost the same date is fig. 182, with the same characteristics of shape, but decorated with the black and gold lacquer so much in vogue at this time. It is in an admirable state of preservation.

In assigning dates, it is only by the comparison of all small details that anything like a definite conclusion can be arrived at. It has been said before, that the general designs of a preceding taste may constantly overlap an innovation, and all the unobtrusive but practical parts of furniture should be equally taken into consideration; the stretchers, the height of the seat, the width of the hoop, and the form of the back legs of chairs are all details to be carefully observed. Vague references to the Stuart Period, or that of William and Mary, convey practically nothing in the arrangement of an evolution, and although a series of objects apparently resembling each other may seem dull, it is only by their close comparison that the differences in their dates can be arrived at.

Writing-chairs, some of exceptional form, were made at the beginning of the seventeenth century. A favourite shape was fig.

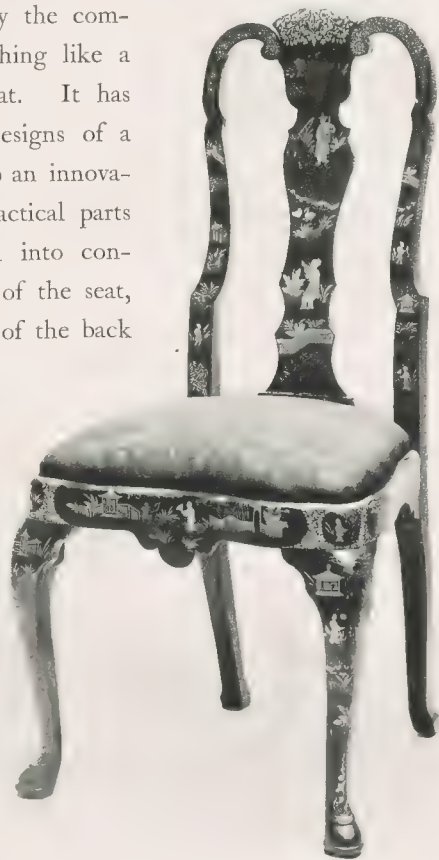


FIG. 182.—BLACK AND GOLD LACQUER CHAIR.  
Property of the VISCOUNTESS WOLSELEY.

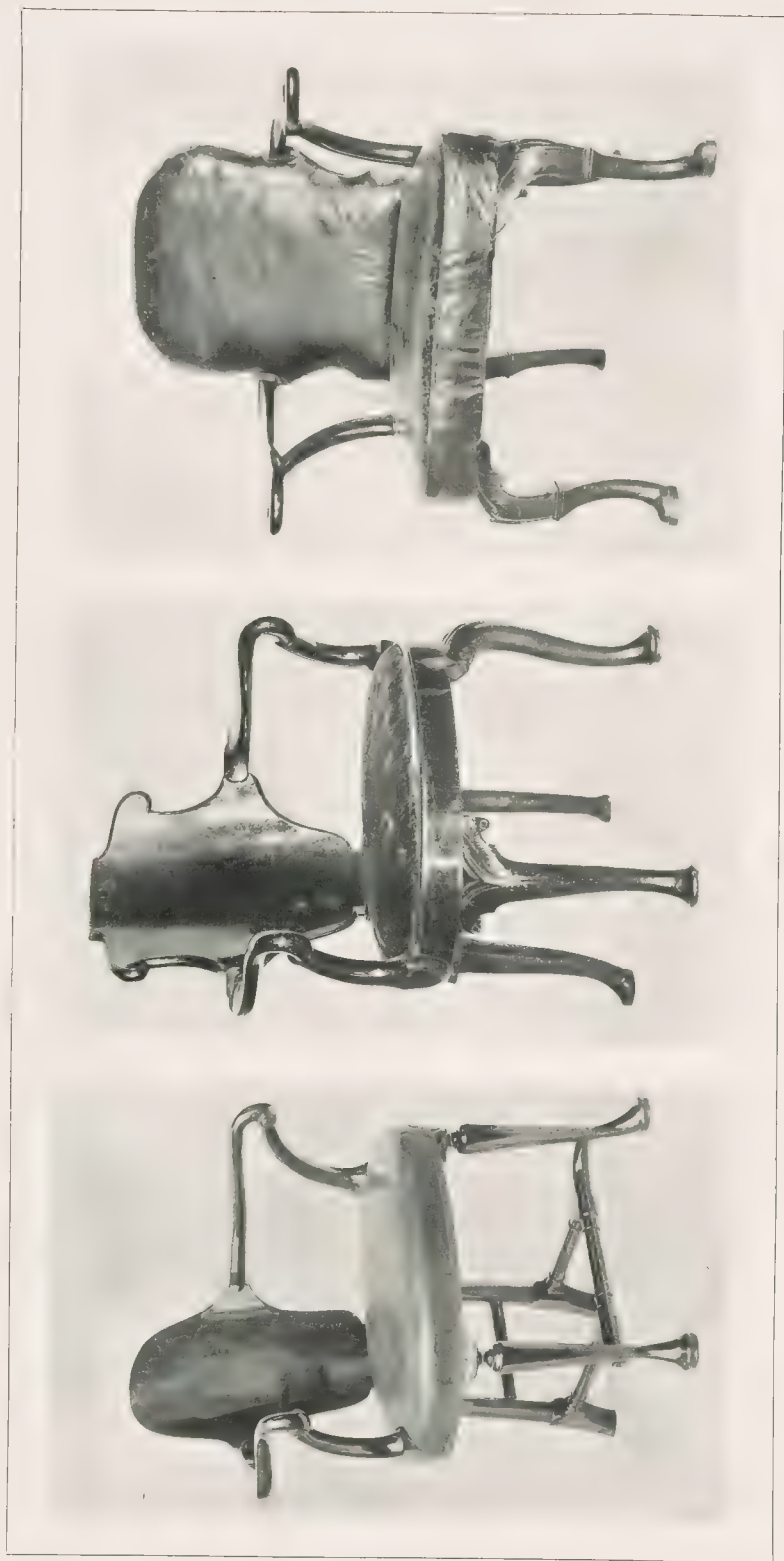


FIG. 183.—WALNUT INLAID WRITING-CHAIR.

Height, 2 feet 11 inches; width, 2 feet

Property of the Hon. CHARLOTTE MARIA LADY NORTH  
and R. EDEN DICKSON, Esq.

FIG. 184 (a).

WALNUT WRITING-CHAIRS.

Property of the MARQUESS OF CHOLMONDELEY.

FIG. 184 (b).



## ENGLISH FURNITURE

183; the back is curved, and formed of one solid piece of wood, inlaid with the initials in cipher of Lord Dudley North. The arms bow outwardly, and finish in scrolls on their curved supports; the seat is round; the legs present a strange combination of the spindle-shaped leg and the club-foot; the stretcher and back legs conform to a date very early in the century. Two more of these writing-chairs, of about 1710, are shown in fig. 184 (*a*), with cabriole legs and club-feet, and (*b*) with the legs more quadrangular, and intersected below the shoulder by a triple moulding; the arms of this chair curve outwardly, and the padded back resembles in its lines the open hoop-back type. This specimen possesses great interest, as having belonged to Sir Robert Walpole, and being the writing-chair he constantly used.

Walnut chairs with upholstered backs, and cabriole legs without stretchers, also commenced to be in fashion at this time. Fig. 185 shows one of these. The knees of the legs are inlaid with marqueterie, and the club-feet are slightly splayed, whilst fig. 186, from a suite of furniture at Ham House, comprising chairs, double chairs, and sofas, is of mahogany, a wood, up to the first decade of the eighteenth century, used only as applied ornament, inlay, or for the manufacture of quite small objects. The back and seat are covered with a figured velvet of English make and design, olive brown and red, on a cream ground; the mahogany legs are quite plain. Fig. 187 is another walnut upholstered chair in this new taste, one of a set, covered with Mortlake tapestry very finely woven, representing bunches of flowers in brilliant colours on a dull rose ground, and much resembling the needlework of the time; the legs are somewhat slight, and there is a general appearance of bareness about the construction of the chair.

The manufacture of Mortlake tapestry began about 1620; at that date James I. sent over to Flanders for tapestry weavers, and established a factory at Mortlake with a subsidy of £2000 per annum. So rapidly did this industry come into favour, that Charles I. gave large orders, while

## ENGLISH FURNITURE

both Rubens and Vandyke designed subjects and borders to be carried out in this manufacture. The finest examples of Mortlake tapestry are the Acts of the Apostles, from the well-known cartoons of Raphael, and the History of Vulcan, now at the Garde Meuble in Paris. The celebrated pieces at Houghton, representing James I. and his family, with small oval portraits of Charles I.'s children in the borders, were also made at Mortlake to the order of that king, and are given later as the background to a bed.

The sums lavished by Louis XIV. and his minister Colbert upon Gobelins tapestry, revived in England an interest in the Mortlake manufacture which had languished during the Rebellion, and tapestry coverings of fine stitch for chairs, settees, and cushions began to be made at this factory at the end of the seventeenth century.

The well-known claw- and ball-foot, adapted from the Oriental design of a dragon's claw holding a pearl, made its appearance in walnut furniture during the first years of the eighteenth century. In early specimens the legs are found connected by stretchers, proving that the fashion succeeded the hoof and early form of club-foot; this claw and ball type of foot, varied a little later by the introduction of a lion's paw, eventually became extremely fashionable. It must be remembered that a form of club-foot ran contemporaneously with both these patterns. Fig. 188 is one of an early set of these ball- and claw-footed chairs; the back is short and comparatively wide, but the legs are still united by stretchers, the back legs finishing on square bases, and represent a date early in Anne's reign. Although a somewhat plain specimen, it well represents the ordinary type of chair that was in favour for so many years, and in which sat the rather dull, plain-coated, and be-periwigged people of this time. Plate XI. (c) is another decorated example. The hooped back curves slightly forward, but is distinctly wider and flatter at the top than in earlier specimens; it is inlaid with two lines of holly, and the splat is filled with a marqueterie of fine arabesques, walnut on a holly ground. The corners to the seat are rounded, and



FIG. 186.—MAHOGANY UPHOLSTERED CHAIR.  
Property of the EARL OF DYSART.



FIG. 185.—WALNUT INLAID CHAIR.  
Property of MESSRS. MORANT.



FIG. 187.—WALNUT UPHOLSTERED CHAIR.  
Height, 2 feet 3 inches; width, 1 foot 9 inches.  
Property of the HON. CHARLOTTE MARIA LADY NORTH  
and R. EDEN DICKSON, Esq.



## ENGLISH FURNITURE

the loose cushion, framed in a rebate moulding, is covered with original coarse needlework in a design of large flowers. The front rail of the seat is inlaid with a panel of marqueterie, and the cabriole legs, without stretchers, are wide and strong at their headings, and crested with a carved shell; the structure is veneered with a well-figured walnut, as in all important chairs of this kind, the legs being solid; the marqueterie, with the absence of stretcher, dates this chair about 1710. Fig. 189, a chair of very much the same shape, is decorated with black and gold lacquer and an enrichment of carved shells. In these early dragon-claw chairs it may be noticed that the energy thrown by the carver into the grip of the claw on the balls is excellent, whilst the later examples are often wanting in vitality. Shells and eagles' heads were favourite ornamental details during Anne's reign; it is rare to find them in combination, but in the chair (fig. 190) the eagle's head ingeniously forms the scroll on either side of the shell; the splat is extremely broad, proving that the date is after 1710, but the grip of the claws lacks realism. A good type of chair, made about 1712, is fig. 191, one of a set of particularly high finish, and furnished with a back stretcher. Towards the end of Anne's reign the splats commenced to lose their simplicity of outline, and fretted and carved



FIG. 188.—WALNUT CHAIR. Property of EDWIN A. ABBEY, Esq.

## ENGLISH FURNITURE

openings were introduced at the side, as in this specimen. Sometimes these are connected with the uprights, as in fig. 192, which is practically the final development of this walnut hooped-back type. Another point of interest in the transitional detail of the splat is the carved plinth, and the cresting, that slightly scrolls over at the top.

Having carried the development of hooped-backed chairs to this point, it will be interesting to trace the course of settees, day-beds, and sofas that accompanied them. The term *sopha*, or *sofa*, was not applied to European furniture before 1685, and this Eastern word, adopted by us from the French, was evidently little in use even in France at the end of the seventeenth century, as St. Simon, when annotating Dagneau's *Journal*, considers it necessary to explain the origin of the term in the following words :—

‘Le *sopha* est une manière d’estrade, couverte de tapis, au fond de la chambre d’audience du grand vizir, sur laquelle il est assis sur des carreaux.’

But a few years later another French writer, Madame d’Aulnoy, takes the term quite for granted when she writes in her *Barbe Bleue* :—

‘Elles monterent ensuite au garde-meuble, ou elles ne pouvent assez admirer le nombre et la beauté des tapisseries, des lits, des *sophas*, des cabinets.’

The term *sofa*, as we accept it, implies a long low couch somewhat like fig. 73 ; but as this back is divided into



FIG. 189.—BLACK LACQUER CHAIR.  
Property of FRANK GREEN, Esq.

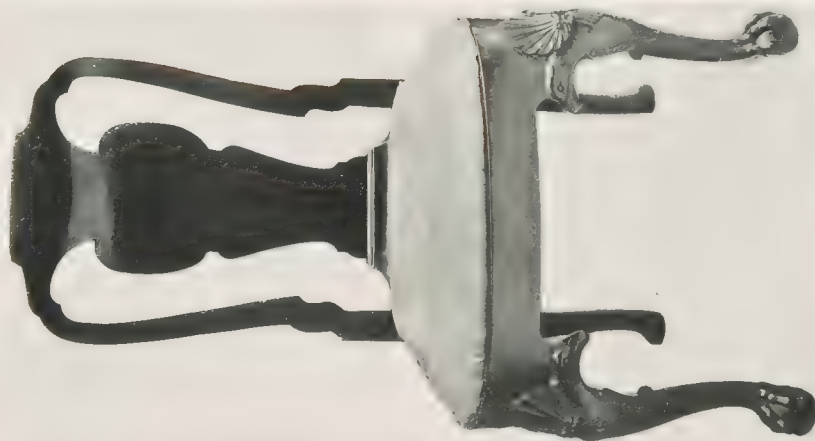


FIG. 190.—WALNUT CHAIR.  
Property of the DUCHESS OF WELLINGTON.

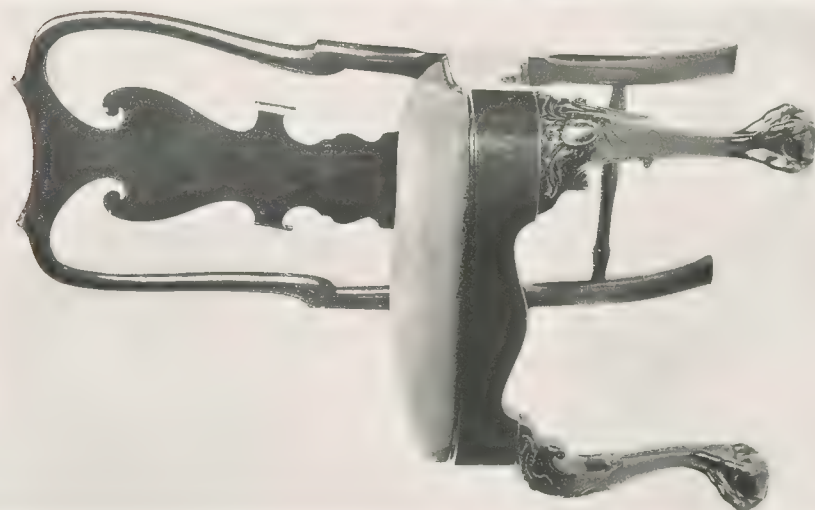


FIG. 191.—MAHOGANY CHAIR.  
Property of EDWIN A. ABBEY, Esq.



FIG. 192.—WALNUT CHAIR.  
Property of the DUCHESS OF WELLINGTON.



## ENGLISH FURNITURE

chair form, it has been classed with the settees. In fig. 193, remarkable for its high back, the lines of the scrolled arms are less sharp and pronounced than in later developments. The legs, connected by a simple stretcher, are of cabriole shape, finishing in cappings under the seat-rail, and in half-scrolls at the feet; the central leg is an ingenious combination of those on the outside, and the result is an hour-glass form that is extremely original. It is of about the date 1705, and has been re-covered

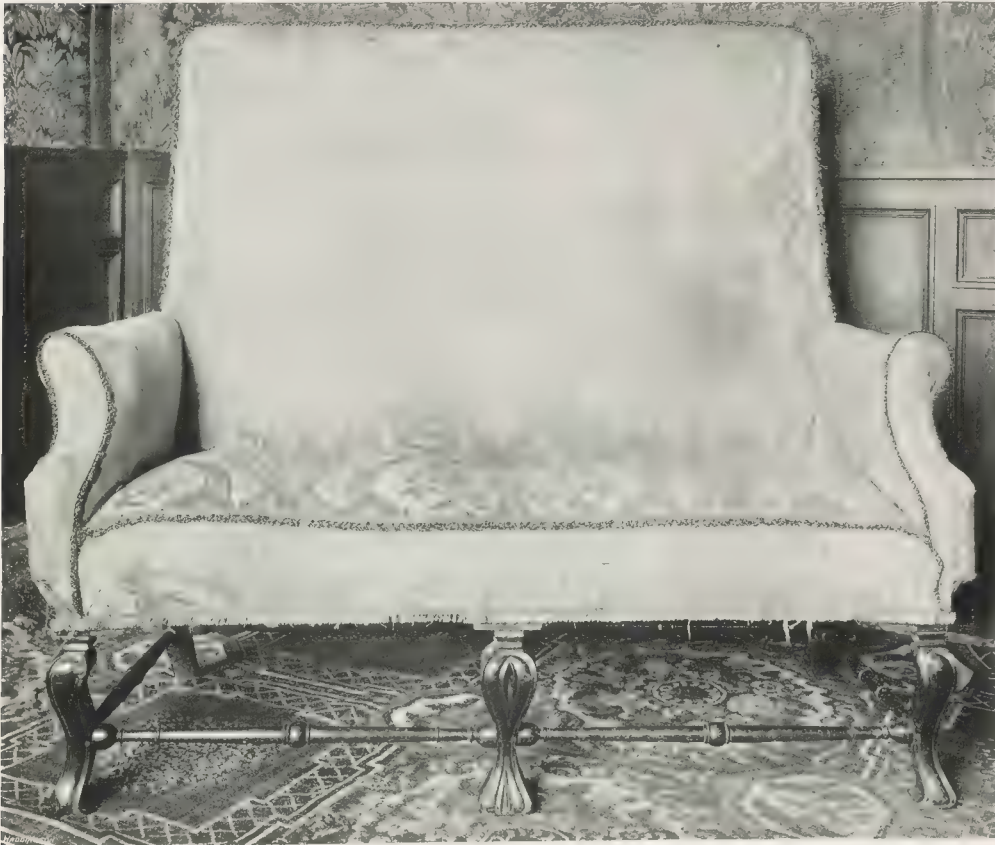


FIG. 193.—WALNUT UPHOLSTERED SOFA. Height, 4 feet 4 inches; length, 5 feet.  
Property of the DUKE OF DEVONSHIRE.

## ENGLISH FURNITURE

with a fine blue damask. In fig. 194, the sofa form begins to be more clearly pronounced, the back is lower, the C scrolling of the arms is sharper, the stretcher is abolished, and the legs terminate in square club-feet, with traces of the fetlock-joint to the hoof still remaining: the carved portions possess their original gilding. This sofa forms one of a pair stated to have belonged to Nell Gwyn; they came from Lauderdale House, in which she lived for a short time, but she died in 1687, and the date of these sofas cannot be before 1700. They were both originally covered in needlework.

It is difficult to understand why comparatively so little of this partly gilt walnut furniture was made, as it is most beautiful in effect, and although age has now toned the gilding and the wood, even when new the combination must have been most decorative. Another of these pieces of furniture with this same combination of walnut and gold is fig. 195, which much resembles the last example, although two or three years later in date, and here the interest is still further maintained by the original covering of deep emerald green velvet, trimmed with a gold galon; the arms differ in their lines from the preceding specimen, and curve outwardly; the pendants from the seat-rail are broken off.

The day-bed (fig. 196), of about 1708, is of unusual breadth and length, the curves of the head-rest forming part of the motive of the cabriole legs; these are intersected with a triple moulding, and the familiar shell forms the cresting; the feet are of shoe form, and the connecting stretcher dates the piece as early in the century; the covering is modern. These specimens from Houghton, dating before 1722, are of great interest, as they must evidently have been moved from the older and smaller house into the new and magnificent building begun by the Prime Minister at that date. Fig. 197 is another day-bed a few years later. The seat-rail has by this time ceased to be carved as in earlier specimens, and is upholstered; the head-rest scrolls over, and the eight legs are of simple cabriole form without stretchers; the squab, frame, and pillows are covered

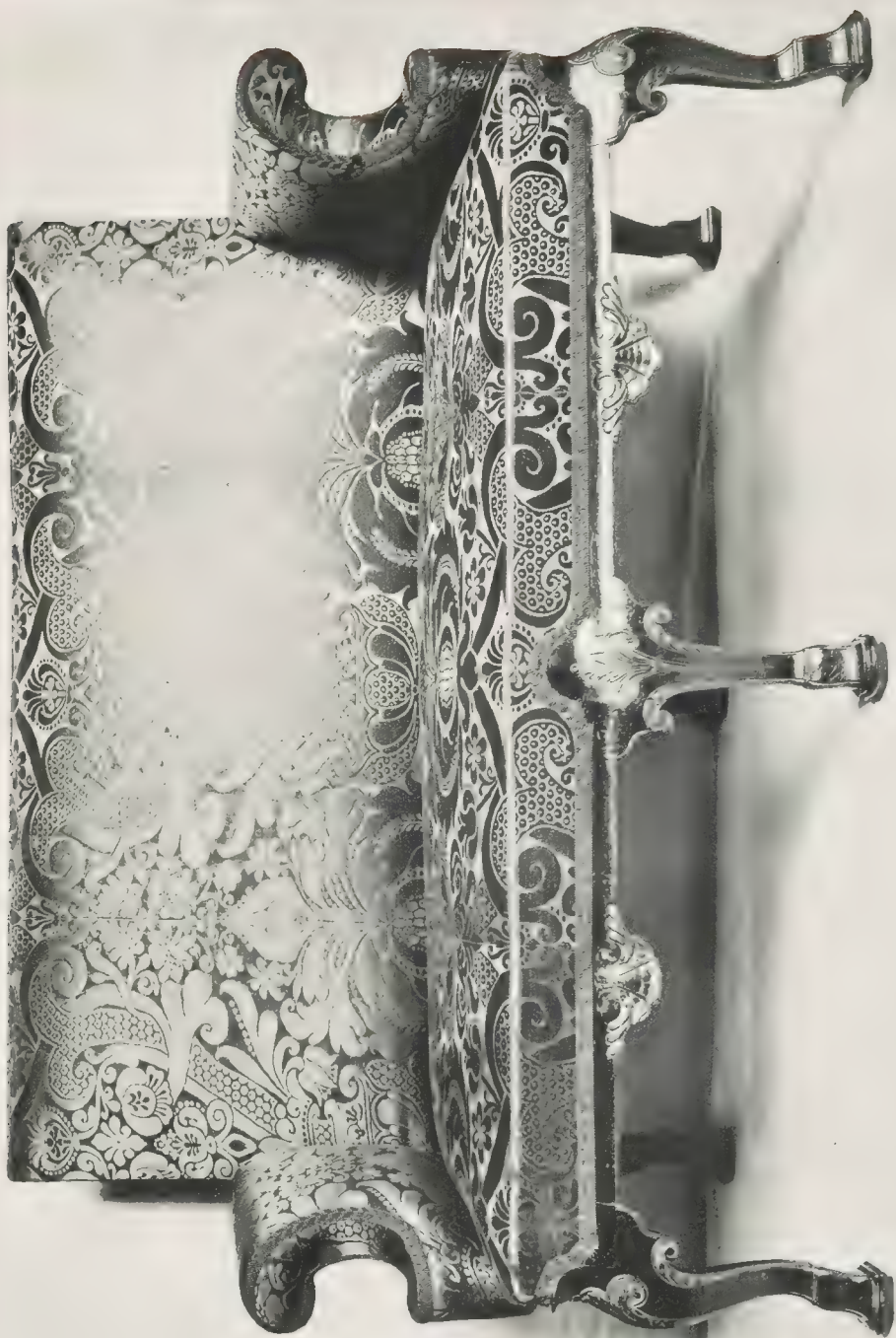


FIG. 194.—WALNUT AND GILT SOFA. Height, 3 feet 4 inches; length, 4 feet 6 inches.





FIG. 175. WALNUT AND GILT SOFA. Height, 3 feet 8 inches; length, 6 feet.  
Property of the MARQUESS OF CHOLMONDELEY.

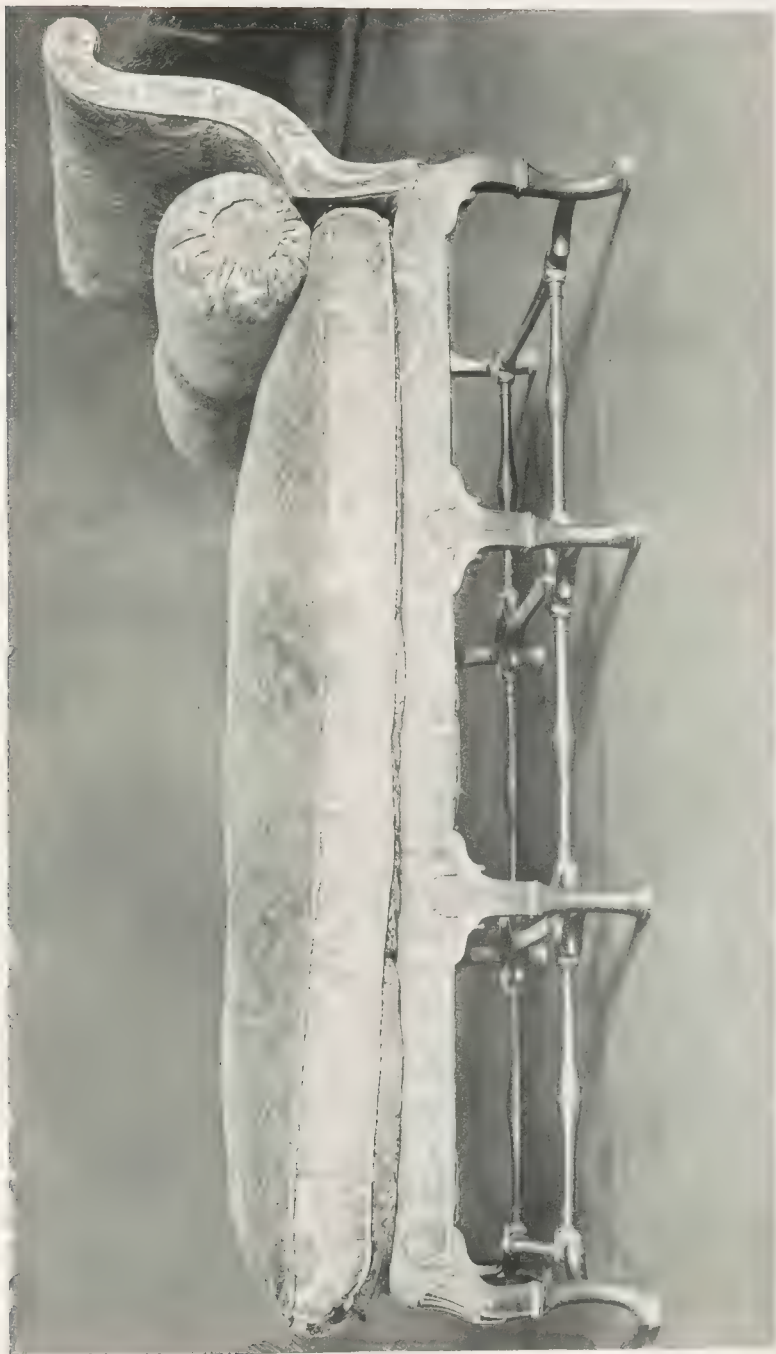


FIG. 196. WALNUT UPHOLSTERED DAY-BED. Length, 6 feet 8 inches; width, 3 feet 4 inches.  
Property of the MARQUESS OF CHOLMONDELFY.

## ENGLISH FURNITURE

with a contemporary green damask, embroidered in silver, and ornamented down the centre with panels of elaborate raised needlework in silver thread; the whole is trimmed with a narrow green and silver braid, but no fringe is employed. These two day-beds are introduced to show that the shape continued to be in request, although rapidly being replaced by the sofa.

Fig. 198 is a mahogany sofa from Ham House, forming part of the suite already described, and of about the date 1715. The lines are long and narrow and the back is rather low; it is covered with the same English velvet as the rest of the suite, and well represents this early type of sofa without stretcher.

Tradition has assigned this entire set of mahogany furniture to the time of Charles II., and to the use of the Cabal when they met at Ham House. It is always uncongenial to dispel the halo of romance that



FIG. 197.—WALNUT UPHOLSTERED DAY-BED. Length, 5 feet 6 inches; width, 2 feet 4 inches.  
Property of the DUKE OF DEVONSHIRE.



## ENGLISH FURNITURE

clings around old furniture and other objects, but period is inexorable, and tradition must give way at times to common-sense. At Holyrood, at any rate until quite recently, some Charles II. furniture was misdated a hundred years, and assigned to the use of Mary Queen of Scots and Darnley, and these erroneous traditions have formed the basis of a system of incorrect dating in several works of reference on furniture. There is a set of well-known furniture, traditionally stated to have been used by Queen Elizabeth when on a visit to one of her ministers, and also preserved in an untouched condition since that date by descendants of the original owner, and so firmly did the present possessor believe in his family records, that although this set consists of exceedingly fine specimens of the full style of Chippendale, made in mahogany and covered with needlework of that period, he preferred to cling to historical tradition and assign them to Tudor times. There are many such traditional mistakes in many of the large houses.



FIG. 198.—MAHOGANY UPHOLSTERED SOFA. Height, 3 feet 4 inches; length, 6 feet 8 inches.  
Property of the EARL OF DYSART.

## ENGLISH FURNITURE

A form of upholstered easy-chair with scrolled arms began to be very popular about 1700, but earlier specimens are rare. The legs and serpentine stretcher of fig. 199 prove that this example is before that date; the C scrolling is repeated as a cresting to the back, and the early sweep to the arms is in bold curves; the chair is covered with needlework of the time in coarse stitch. Plate XIII. is a very perfect example of another of these so-called grandfather chairs also covered with its original needlework of bold design in very fine stitch; the walnut cabriole legs ending in dragon's claw-feet approximate the chair to a date about



FIG. 199.—WALNUT UPHOLSTERED EASY-CHAIR. Property of F. W. PHILLIPS, Esq.





PLATE XIII (AGE OF WALNUT)  
WALNUT CHAIR COVERED WITH NEEDLEWORK

HEIGHT, 3 FEET 2 INCHES  
WIDTH, 2 " 8 "

PHOTOGRAPHED DIRECT FROM THE OBJECT









FIG. 200.—WOOL NEEDLEWORK CARPET. Length, 12 feet; width, 9 feet.  
Property of PERCY MACQUOIN, Esq.

## ENGLISH FURNITURE

1710, the vigorous grasp of the claw also proving it is early in style ; the form of the arms and legs of all these easy-chairs resemble those of the contemporary sofas. It is covered in needlework of very fine stitch, the ground being worked in rich green wools, and the large tulips, roses, and



FIG. 201.—WALNUT UPHOLSTERED LOVE-SEAT. Height, 3 feet 5 inches ; length, 3 feet.  
Property of C. ASSHETON SMITH, Esq.



## ENGLISH FURNITURE

carnations in brilliant silks. It is rare to find these chairs with their original covering for front and sides, like this example.

The fashion for needlework, stimulated by Queen Mary about 1690, continued all through the reigns of Anne and George I., consequently we find many of the sofas, easy-chairs, and love-seats of these periods



FIG. 202.—WALNUT UPHOLSTERED LOVE-SEAT. Property of FRANK GREEN, Esq.



## ENGLISH FURNITURE

covered with this work. There is an elaborate bed quilt in existence at Madresfield Court, stated to have been worked by Anne whilst Princess, and Lady Marlborough. Carpets are also in existence, some of considerable size, made at this period and composed entirely of wool-work in fine stitch. Fig. 200 is a specimen of about 1690, with a blue ground-work covered with a yellow trellis, the centre and border being in a bold



FIG. 203.—WALNUT UPHOLSTERED LOVE-SEAT. Height, 3 feet 4 inches; length, 3 feet 1 inch.  
Property of the MARQUESS OF CHOLMONDELEY.

## ENGLISH FURNITURE

design of flowers and foliage in brilliant colours. This carpet measures 12 feet by 9 feet, and the amount of work entailed must have been enormous, as it weighs over 23 lbs., but the simple country life of those days gave ample opportunities to the ladies of the house for employment of this kind.



FIG. 204.—MAHOGANY UPHOLSTERED LOVE-SEAT. Height, 3 feet 5 inches ; length, 3 feet 1 inch. Property of the EARL OF DYSART.

## ENGLISH FURNITURE

In fig. 201, a love-seat of the beginning of the century, the legs are plain and connected by the ordinary stretcher of 1705, and the arms have a distinctive outward scroll; the design of the original needlework covering is conventional, in lines of blue and red with a buff-coloured



FIG. 205.—WALNUT SETTEE. Property of W. E. GEORGE, Esq.



## ENGLISH FURNITURE

pattern on a tawny ground, and the introduction of the large single carnation in the centre of the back and seat is effective. In fig. 202, rather later in date, there is no stretcher, and marqueterie is introduced on the knees of the delicate cabriole legs; the design of the needlework is a series of scrolls of different colours on a dark ground. Needlework for the covering of such large pieces of furniture must have taken a considerable time to complete, and as it was generally designed to fit an especial piece, this accounts for the temporary uncovering of old silk



FIG. 206.—WALNUT SETTEE. Height, 3 feet 4 inches; length, 4 feet.  
Property of MESSRS. J. MALLETT AND SONS.

## ENGLISH FURNITURE

which is so frequently to be found under the needlework on this class of furniture.

Fig. 203, of about 1710, has lost its original covering; the arms are not C scrolled; the legs are carved on the knees and square club-feet with shells and acanthus. Fig. 204 is one of a pair of small seats forming part of the mahogany suite already mentioned at Ham House; the legs here

are shorter than in the preceding specimens, and the arms form complete sides.

About the middle of Anne's reign a new form of settee made its first appearance; this in construction resembled two chair backs with their splats and usual ornamentation joined together by a top rail forming the hoops, and worked out of one piece of wood. So favoured and so fashionable did this seat become, that the motive was continued throughout the eighteenth century, and lasted nearly a hundred years.

Plate XIV. represents an early specimen of these wooden chair-back settees; it is of walnut, the face covered with a highly figured veneer of the same wood; the



FIG. 207.—WALNUT CHAIR.

Height, 3 feet 4 inches.

Property of MESSRS. J. MALLETT AND SONS.

splats are inlaid with walnut marqueterie on a holly ground; the arms are plain, with an outward curve and roll over at the elbow, and the legs are of ball and claw form, headed with carved shells; the waved seat-rail is also inlaid; the cushion seat is loose in a rebate moulding, and covered with needlework of large coloured flowers and leaves on a light olive-brown ground. The date of this piece is about 1710; it formed part of a set of two settees and eight chairs. In the fine settee (fig. 205), a few years later in date, the splat is rather more elaborate in form, with carving on the scrolls, and is connected to the uprights by a horizontal extension,





PLATE XIV (AGE OF WALNUT)

WALNUT SETTEE INLAID WITH MARQUETERIE

PROPERTY OF

PERCY MACQUOID, Esq.

Shirley 210. and 211







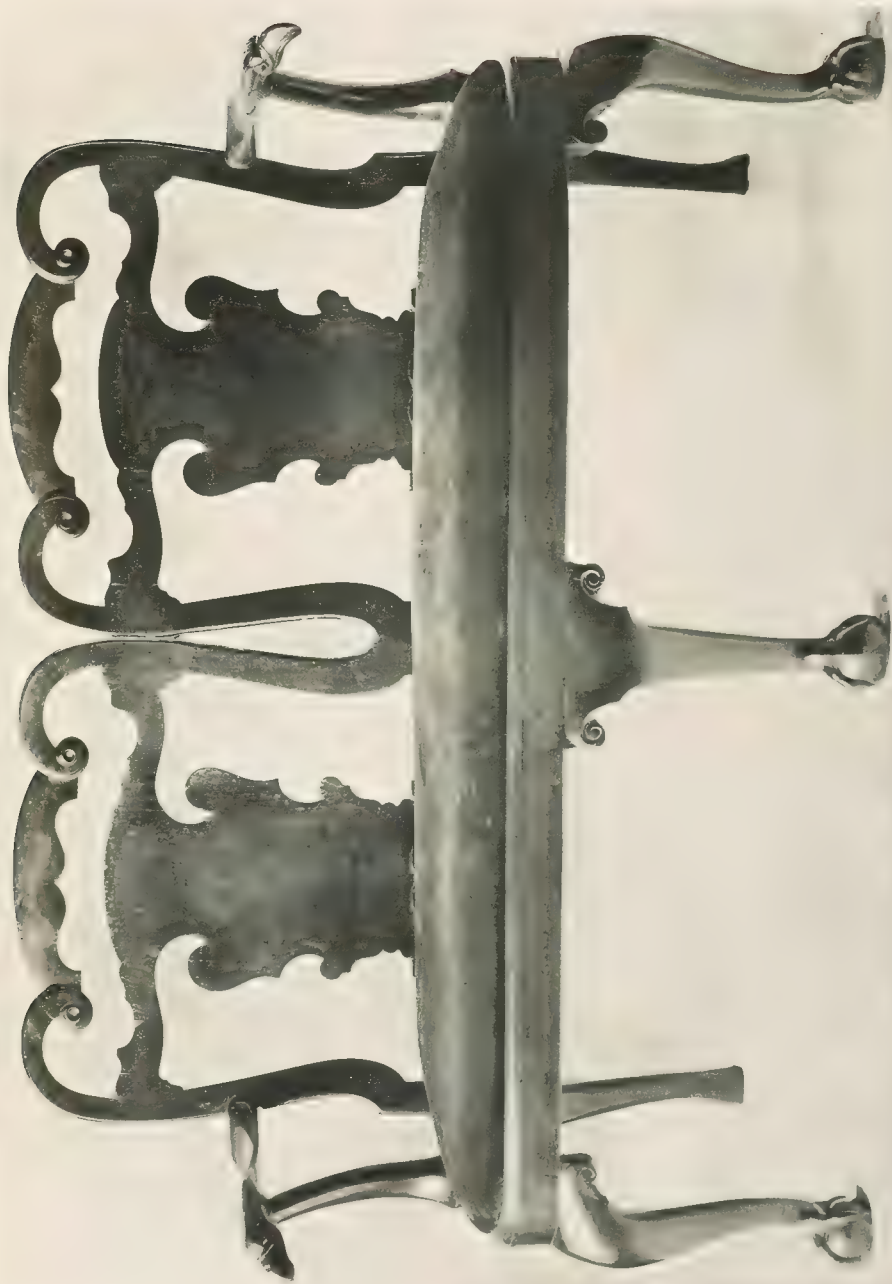


FIG. 208.—WALNUT SETTEE. Heights, 3 feet 3 inches; length, 4 feet 6 inches; width of seat, 2 feet.  
Property of W. A. MEREDITH, Esq.

## ENGLISH FURNITURE

finishing in an elaborate heading centring in a shell; this shell is also introduced at the junction of the two backs, on the seat-rail, and as a cresting to the legs, which terminate in strongly defined claw and ball; the seat has the original needlework covering.

Another walnut settee of about 1718 is given in fig. 206; here the hoops are carved with representations of eagle heads holding tassels; the splat and knees to the cabriole legs are also carved with acanthus and flowers in low relief; the arrangement of the four claws on the ball of the centre foot is unusual, and the gradation of the legs is not so pronounced as in the earlier examples. The chair with arms (fig. 207) repeats the design of the last settee with very slight variation, and is given here to show how these chairs and settees were made to match.

Fig 208, also about 1718, is perfectly plain, except for the eagle headings to the arms and claw-feet, and is veneered with a particularly fine figured walnut; the splats are not united to the cresting, but branch out to meet the sides. It should be observed that as this form of seat progresses, the chair back frequently becomes wider and more squat in form, and that the open elaboration of the splat is indicative of its late character. These settees must have been found convenient as giving plenty of room for the voluminous coats of the men, and enabling the women to show off their brocaded and preposterous hooped dresses. The plain skirts had gone out early in Anne's reign, giving way to those covered with frills and furbelows, with full sacque back and panniers. And as early as 1709 the *Spectator* mentions that 'the petticoats which began to heave and swell before you left us, are now blown up into a most enormous concave, and rise every day more and more.'

The arm supports of the arm-chairs that were made to match these settees curved backwards, and the seats were broad, to allow for the exaggerated fashions.

## CHAPTER IX



THE cabriole leg, as it became popular, was also introduced on to different forms of tables, chests of drawers, and stands to cabinets. The early and crude type is shown on the chest of drawers (fig. 209) of a date about 1700, and is a late example of the low stand that had hitherto accompanied such pieces of furniture; the cornice and mouldings round the drawers, and the short clubby legs connected by the cusped and arched base-boarding, prove that its date must be early in the century, although the handle-plates are more perforated than is generally found at that time; the drawers are veneered with a facing of good figured walnut, and edged with a herring-bone inlay of the same wood. In fig. 210, a chest of tall-boys shape, the cornice is admirable in its simplicity, and a so-called cock-beading is introduced as a finish round the drawers, which are veneered with tiger walnut and cornered with a narrow inlay of ivory and ebony. The lower portion or stand of this piece rests upon cabriole legs ending in claw and ball feet, headed by the favourite shell ornamentation, introduced as a pendant on the lower rail. Fig. 211 is a chest of drawers of this same period on a high stand, with slight cabriole legs ending in club-feet; it has no cornice, which is unusual on an example of this height; the walnut veneer is exceedingly dark, the drop-handles belong to the previous century.

The little table (fig. 212), probably used as a dressing-table or wash-stand, somewhat resembles those already given with turned legs; this and fig. 213 well represent the type of small table used in bedrooms during the first twenty years of the eighteenth century. An eccentric form of cabriole leg was introduced into tables about 1708 to





FIG. 209. WALNUT CHEST OF DRAWERS. Height, 4 feet 2 inches; length, 3 feet 5 inches; depth, 1 foot 10 inches. Property of W. A. MEREDITH, Esq.



FIG. 210.—WALNUT TALL-BOYS CHEST OF DRAWERS. Height, 6 feet; width, 2 feet 10 inches.  
Property of ARTHUR JAMES, Esq.

## ENGLISH FURNITURE

1715, which obtained but little favour, probably on account of its disagreeable appearance and inconvenient shape. Fig. 214 is a small plain example of this style; the top is of sycamore, and is moulded at the corners in a favourite manner of the time; the solid walnut legs unite to the frame in the usual cabriole fashion, and break out into short but strong curves, descending perpendicularly in square and spindle form, breaking again at the junction of the fetlock-joint and square club-foot. This table no doubt fulfilled the office of a wash-stand, the top being of solid wood and not veneered. The card-table (fig. 215) shows the adaptation of the cabriole leg to this popular item of furniture, of which many kinds were made



FIG. 211—WALNUT CHEST OF DRAWERS. Property of the VISCOUNTESS WOLSELEY.





FIG. 212.—WALNUT TABLE. Height, 2 feet 8 inches ; width, 2 feet 6 inches.



FIG. 213.—WALNUT TABLE. Height, 2 feet 4 inches ; width, 2 feet 6 inches.

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soon after the beginning of the century. Their construction was various; sometimes the legs and sides folded in with the top, or swing legs supported the open flap; such tables invariably stood against the wall when not in use, and were not decorated on that side; they were also frequently made in pairs. The corners of these table-tops often finished in circles, slightly dished to hold candlesticks, and had sunken hollows for the counters and money. The shape of silver candlesticks underwent a complete change in about 1690, when the light-hammered variety, formed as a column with spreading base, began to give way to the more solid, shorter, and cast manufacture with smaller base, and it is probable that this new fashion in candlesticks was prompted by their convenient use for



FIG. 214.—WALNUT TABLE WITH SYCAMORE TOP. Height, 2 feet 7 inches; length, 2 feet 3 inches; width, 1 foot 6 inches. Property of T. CHARBONNIER, Esq.

## ENGLISH FURNITURE

the corners of these tables. Fig. 216 shows the top of a lacquer card-table of about 1712, showing these sinkings for candles and counters; the ground is black, and the decoration, consisting of landscape, houses, and figures, is in red and gold lacquer. Another piece of English lacquer is fig. 217, a cabinet mounted on a stand with elegant cabriole legs, the knees and feet of which are carved in the finest manner of 1712. Stretchers were by then no longer introduced on tables and stands, and the abolition of this feature is one of the most important structural



FIG. 215.—WALNUT CARD-TABLE. Height, 2 feet 4 inches; width of top, 2 feet 8 inches.



## ENGLISH FURNITURE

differences between the late seventeenth-century chairs and tables and those of the succeeding century.

The gilt and partly gilt furniture, such as figs. 174 and 194, seems likely to have been designed for a more gorgeous background than the



FIG. 216.—TOP OF LACQUER CARD-TABLE. Property of C. ASHETON SMITH, Esq.



FIG. 217.—CABINET ON LACQUER STAND. Property of MESSRS. MORANT.

2 : 2 H

## ENGLISH FURNITURE

simple tall wainscot panelling and wall-papers of the ordinary gentleman's house. Amongst the nobility and those connected with the Court, gilt furniture was evidently much on the increase towards the end of Anne's reign. The Palace of Blenheim, which was built at the nation's expense, between the years 1705 and 1720, from the designs of Sir John Vanbrugh, and which was the talk of all England, was furnished in the most lavish and extravagant manner by the Duchess of Marlborough, who was greatly answerable for this new departure in the gilded decoration of furniture. Lady Wentworth at the time writes as follows to her son in Flanders, proving the widespread interest taken in the building of this vast pile :

'My dearist and best of children

'I am much rejoysed at your fyne present, I wish you may often have such and better, till you ar as ritch as the Duke of Molberry whoe is billding the fynest hous at Woodstock that ever was seen, thear is threescore rooms of a flower, noe stairs only a little pair that goes to the uper roomes which are only for sarvents, and staitly wood, which he cuts out walks in, and fyne gardens that are fower myles about. It is beleeved furneture and al cannot cost les than three hundred thousand pd. why should you not be so fortunate as he ?'

(This sum would be equivalent to about £1,000,000 at the present day.) In the Duke's letters during his campaigns we find that from time to time he sent home pictures and tapestries from abroad, and the following extract from one of his letters to the Duchess, shows that some difficulties were attached then to the importation of furniture even by so great a person :—

'Tournay April 19 1710.

'I should be glad if you are in London, that you would give Mr. Maynwaring the trouble of speaking to some at the Custom House, I having sent by Captain Sanders one picture and some looking glasses. They are not of any value ; but I find among other marks of declining favor, that I must meet with trouble at the Custom house. The best way will be to send nothing more from hence ; for everything may be had in England perhaps a little dearer.'

The furnishing of the enormous palace was evidently entirely intrusted to the Duchess, who not only was a shrewd judge of a bargain, but took



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the greatest pains over the minutest details. In 1714 she wrote as follows to Mrs. Jennens, the wife of her solicitor :—

‘Dear Mrs. Jennens

‘I have looked upon this damask by daylight, the pattern is not so large as he stated ; but hee has kept it so ill that it looks full as old as what I have, which is better than if it were a fine fresh Damask. But I think it is a good argument to him to sell it cheap, for tho’ I like it very much for this use, I would not buy it for any other. But don’t part with it, for I would have the whole piece on any terms that you can get it. I shall want a vast number of feather beds and Quilts I wish you would take this opportunity to know the Prices of all such things as will be wanted in that wild unmerciful Hous, for the man you go to is famous for low Prices. I would have some of the Feather beds, Swansdown, all good and sweet feathers, even for the servants. I am not in Hast for anything you are so good as to do for me.’

At times her instructions to Mrs. Jennens are most involved, but show what an amount of pains the Duchess took in small details. The following extract from another letter is interesting in showing how much of the trimming of curtains, etc., was done at home :—

‘This narrow Fring is enough to put upon the Feet Base of the Bed and if the broad can bee made to do the two side Bases, they are not seen at the same Time that the Feet is seen and if it is a little narrower I think it no great Matter. I say that because I fancy they may make it up of near half the Breadth it is now. Six Feet is wanted for the side Bases, and as much more as it will take up in putting on. It is to lye upon the Damask which require the less thickness. I shall want galloon of these sorts to lace the curtains and to turn the chairs and window curtains. May I ask what they will do it for an ounce. You will observe the fine colour of the Gold ; tis being the best duple guilt which makes it last so long, and look so well for this has been made this eight years at least. . . . This is the Collour of the Damask of which this bed is made which I must match exactly because it will be so fine a Fourniture. I shall want of it two window Curtains, twelve Chairs and four Curtains for the Bed.’

The Duchess had at the date of this letter been for many years collecting vast quantities of stuffs for the furnishing of the palace, and that she had been in the habit of making use of everybody she could, is shown by the following letter, one of the many on this subject, written from Windsor Castle in the height of her power in 1708 to the Earl of Manchester in Venice :—

‘I have received the honor of your Lordships letter, You have had the goodness to

## ENGLISH FURNITURE

give yourself more trouble in my small affairs than I thought it possible for a man to do, and are more particular and exact than ever I met with anybody in my life. I desire your Lordship will be pleased to give directions for to have made the quantities of damasks and velvets that I have put down in English measure—of the green damask 1300 yards; yellow damask 600 yards; crimson damask 600 yards; scarlet plain velvet 200 yards; plain blue velvet 200 yards; scarlet damask the same colour as the velvet 100 yards; scarlet satin 200 yards; blue satin same colour as the velvet 200 yards. Your Lordship says scarlet is the more difficult color, and seems to think they do not dye that so well as we do, for I think that you sent me was the most beautiful color I ever saw and I like it better for a bed than crimson being not so common. . . . The figured velvets of general colours are not much liked, though in the fashion, but I should like mightily scarlet figured velvet without any mixture of colours, and blue and green the same, and when your Lordship has the opportunity I should be glad to see a pattern of them.'

It is interesting to find that there are remnants of these foreign damasks still at Blenheim, but so late as 1720 it is certain that a large quantity of them was unemployed and that many of the rooms there must have been uncurtained, for on the occasion of some private theatricals at the palace in that year, these silks and velvets were evidently used as properties, for Lady Blaney in a contemporary letter writes :—

'I played the high priest in an embroidered surplice that came from Holland. . . . I suppose we made a very grand appearance; there was a profusion of brocade rolls, etc., of what was to be the window curtains at Blenheim.'

The quantity of furniture required for this palace must have been very great, the library alone being 183 feet long and 32 feet wide; it was originally intended for a picture-gallery.

Fig. 218 is the only bed left at Blenheim contemporary with the building of the house; the dome and tester are in their original condition, the remainder of the bed having been cut down to almost half its height in order to fit the room into which it has been removed. It was originally in the State bedchamber, hung with blue damask interlaced with gold, and is probably the State bed referred to in the letter of the Duchess to Mrs. Jennens, and for which she orders the gold lacing. The domed canopy is surmounted by a ducal crown, and the tester surrounding it is



FIG. 218. -GILT AND MAHOGANY BED. Property of the DUKE OF MARLBOROUGH.



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crested with a trellised cornice of shells and scrolls in the fashion of 1715, terminating at the four corners in plumed helmets. Beneath this runs a frieze carved with a delicate and floral acanthus scroll, gold on a cream ground; the ceiling of the tester is composed of architectural mouldings and ornaments elaborately carved and gilt; the foot-rail and sides are carved in guilloche decorated in cream and gold; the posts, which have been much reduced in height, are of mahogany, fluted and gilt. The original hangings of blue and gold are described in a guide-book of 1806;

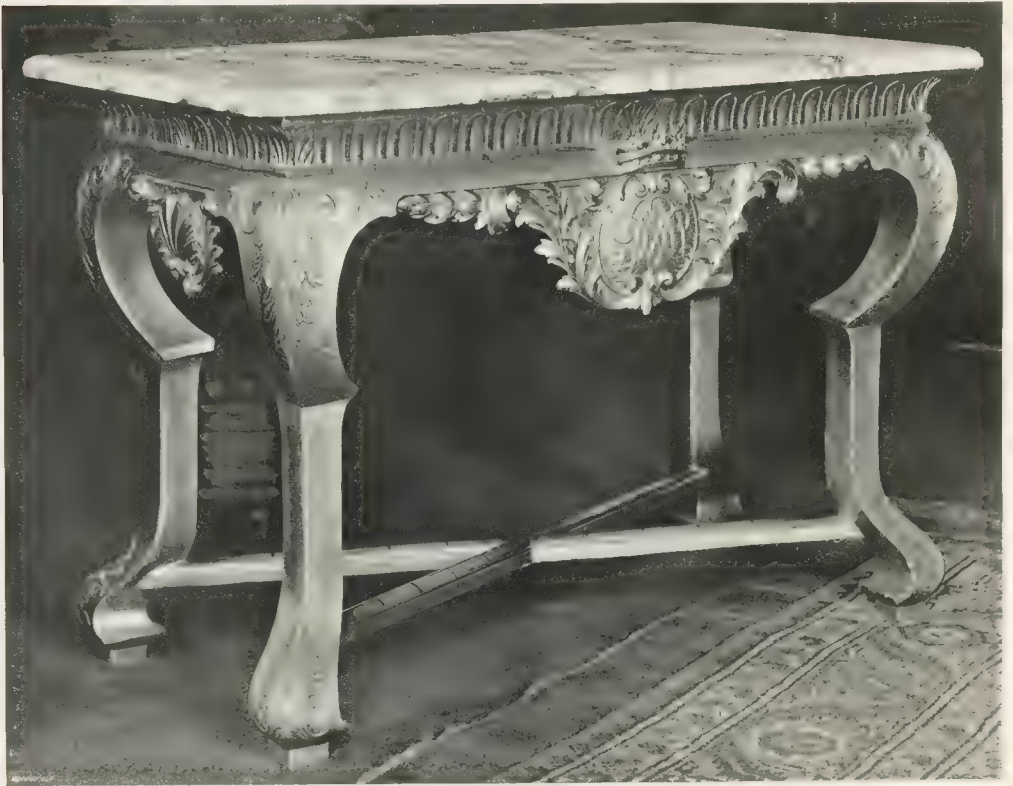


FIG. 219.—GILT CONSOLE TABLE. Height, 2 feet 7 inches; length, 3 feet 8 inches; depth, 2 feet. Property of the DUKE OF MARLBOROUGH.



PLATE XV (AGE OF WALNUT)  
WALNUT INLAID WRITING-CABINET

HEIGHT, 7 FEET 2 INCHES

WIDTH, 4 "

DEPTH, 1 FOOT 10 $\frac{1}{2}$  "

PROPERTY OF  
ALFRED A. DE PASS, Esq.







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they were replaced by an upholstery of pink silk and Venetian rose point lace, recently again removed and transferred to a modern bed.

The console table (fig. 219) formed part of a suite of gilt furniture made for one of the rooms at Blenheim and was very probably designed by Vanbrugh, as the same heaviness of touch and eccentricity of taste found in the general decoration of the house is noticeable in its proportions. The strange curved motive of the cabriole legs resembles that found on fig. 214, in this instance finishing in scrolled and carved feet; the frieze is carved, with a classical banding centring in a shell, beneath which is a pendant edged with floral acanthus surrounding the cipher of John Churchill, Duke of Marlborough, surmounted by a ducal crown; the top is marble, and the legs are united by a straight stretcher of X form to support the weight; the whole of the wood-work is thickly gilt on a gesso ground.

Fig. 220 is one of a pair of guéridons belonging to this suite; the shaft presents the broken and eccentric motive of the legs of the console table, and in its isolation outrages all laws of proportion and line; the top (fig. 221) is of vase-shaped form, surrounded by leaves of acanthus; the upper surface is carved and worked in gilt gesso, with sprays of flowers and the Duke's cipher surrounded by four C scrolls. More examples of this type will be given later with other gilt furniture of this period.

The writing-cabinet (Plate xv.), of about 1710, possesses an interest of personal ownership apart from its construction, having been the property of Dean Swift. It is veneered with walnut and surmounted by a plain cornice, beneath which are two doors filled with crystal cut looking-glass and two drawers; these are framed in four pilasters of marqueterie in ebony and holly, the plinth being inlaid in a design of sphinxes and conventional ornament; the lower portion opens as a writing-flap (underneath which is a slide), and contains a series of pigeon-holes and small drawers in serpentine form, the divisions being inlaid; below this is a central cupboard and six drawers of concave frontage banded with lines of ebony and holly; the



## ENGLISH FURNITURE

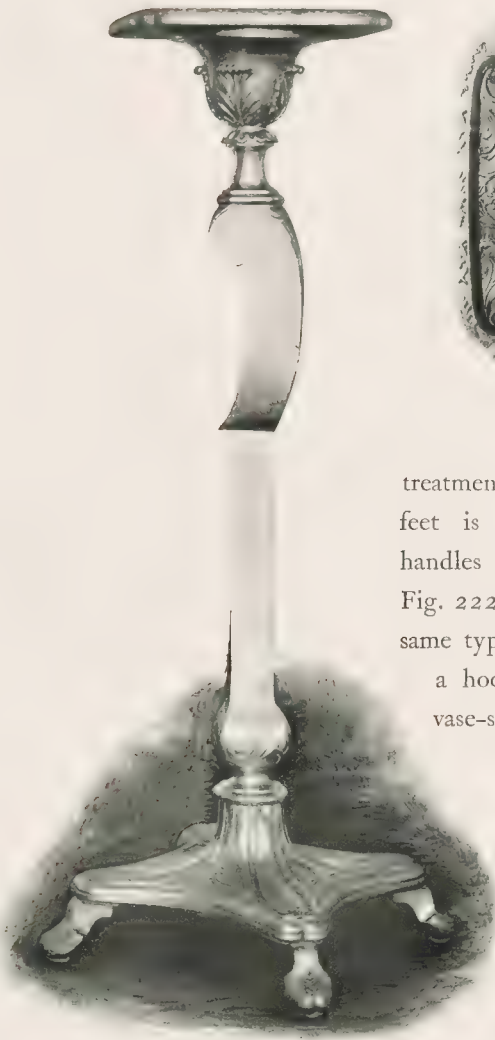


FIG. 220.—GILT GUÉRIDON. Height, 4 feet 8 inches.  
Property of the DUKE OF MARLBOROUGH.



FIG. 221.—TOP OF SAME.

treatment of the well-proportioned stand and feet is particularly original. The plain handles are contemporary with the piece. Fig. 222 is a rather earlier specimen of the same type of cabinet. It is surmounted by a hooded and broken cornice and three vase-shaped finials; the upper portion in this instance opens in one door composed of crystal cut looking-glass contained within two pilasters; the lower portion is in the form of a writing bureau and chest of drawers; the handles and lock-plates are plain; the cock-beadings round the drawers are large and early in character.

In the writing-cabinet (fig. 223), of about 1715, the plain straight frieze in Plate xv. is repeated, and the top opens in two doors framed by

## ENGLISH FURNITURE



FIG. 222.—WALNUT WRITING-CABINET.  
Property of MESSRS. ISAACS.

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fluted pilasters ; the hooded form is suggested by a fine inlaid line of holly on the doors, which are bordered with a cross-banding of walnut. The figure and colour of the veneer are exceptionally fine. The lower portion comprises a series of small drawers and a writing-slide, underneath which is one long drawer ; these are contained within two doors, cross-banded and veneered ; the legs to the stand are of slight cabriole form.

But short mention has been made of the colour and character of walnut. Our ordinary English walnut differed from many of the varieties grown abroad, being lighter in colour and more open in the grain ; it therefore seldom attained the bronze-like appearance found on the surface of foreign walnut furniture. Great numbers of walnut-trees must have existed here throughout the seventeenth century, having been planted at the end of Elizabeth's reign. This tree must be at least fifty years old before the dark centre of the wood is sufficiently large to cut from, the external and light-coloured portions next the bark being worthless. Walnut wood was occasionally used for high-class furniture and panelling as early as 1600, but the

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FIG. 223.—WALNUT WRITING-CABINET. Property of FRANK GREEN, Esq.

quantity of furniture made from this English wood during the second half of the seventeenth century was very great, the indigenous supply must have corresponded to the amount, and when mahogany sprang into fashion, a serious commercial loss must have been entailed by the importation of the latter wood. In estimating the bulk of walnut used between 1660 and 1720, it should be taken into account that the structure of all this furniture was oak or deal, and the surfaces only veneered in walnut; legs of chairs and tables were usually made of the solid wood.

Walnut furniture is much benefited by constant rubbing, and the occasional use of beeswax. Where the original varnish has chilled or discoloured, this should be removed (if possible by spirit and not by scraping), leaving



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the surface of the wood untouched, for in all restoration it is better to do too little than too much. Old varnish on marqueterie so frequently obscures the variety and colours of the different woods employed that its removal will in almost every case be found beneficial. As carving was naturally impossible on veneer, it was confined to those portions of the furniture that were of solid wood, decoration on the plain surfaces being obtained by the introduction of marqueterie or figure of the veneer.

The taste for this style of marqueterie lasted from about 1680 until 1710, when a sentiment of simplicity began to be effected, in which vivacity and colour gave way to a refined though somewhat joyless result, yet remarkable for practical excellence and handiwork.

After the death of Queen Mary the Court for a time lost all elements of brightness and polish, and Anne on her accession exercised no personal influence upon the arts of her day, her preferences being confined to domestic duties, dress, and the free indulgence of a healthy appetite. Her somewhat lethargic temperament was typical of the people who surrounded her, at a time when all enterprise in Art, save in light satirical literature and music, was neglected for place-hunting, purposeless political party-feeling, cards, and tea-parties; the interests of the nation being divided between the war with France and State lotteries.

The scientific proportions and well-considered mouldings of Sir Christopher Wren influenced the details of William and Anne furniture far more than the elaborated floral decorations of Gibbon. Sir John Vanbrugh, though considered by many at that time an 'Admirable Crichton,' did little by his gigantic efforts in architecture to advance this art, and had practically no lasting effect on the furniture of this country.

The decline of walnut furniture was rapid and more decided than that of oak, but the character of its design and methods of construction continued to strongly influence the succeeding age of mahogany.



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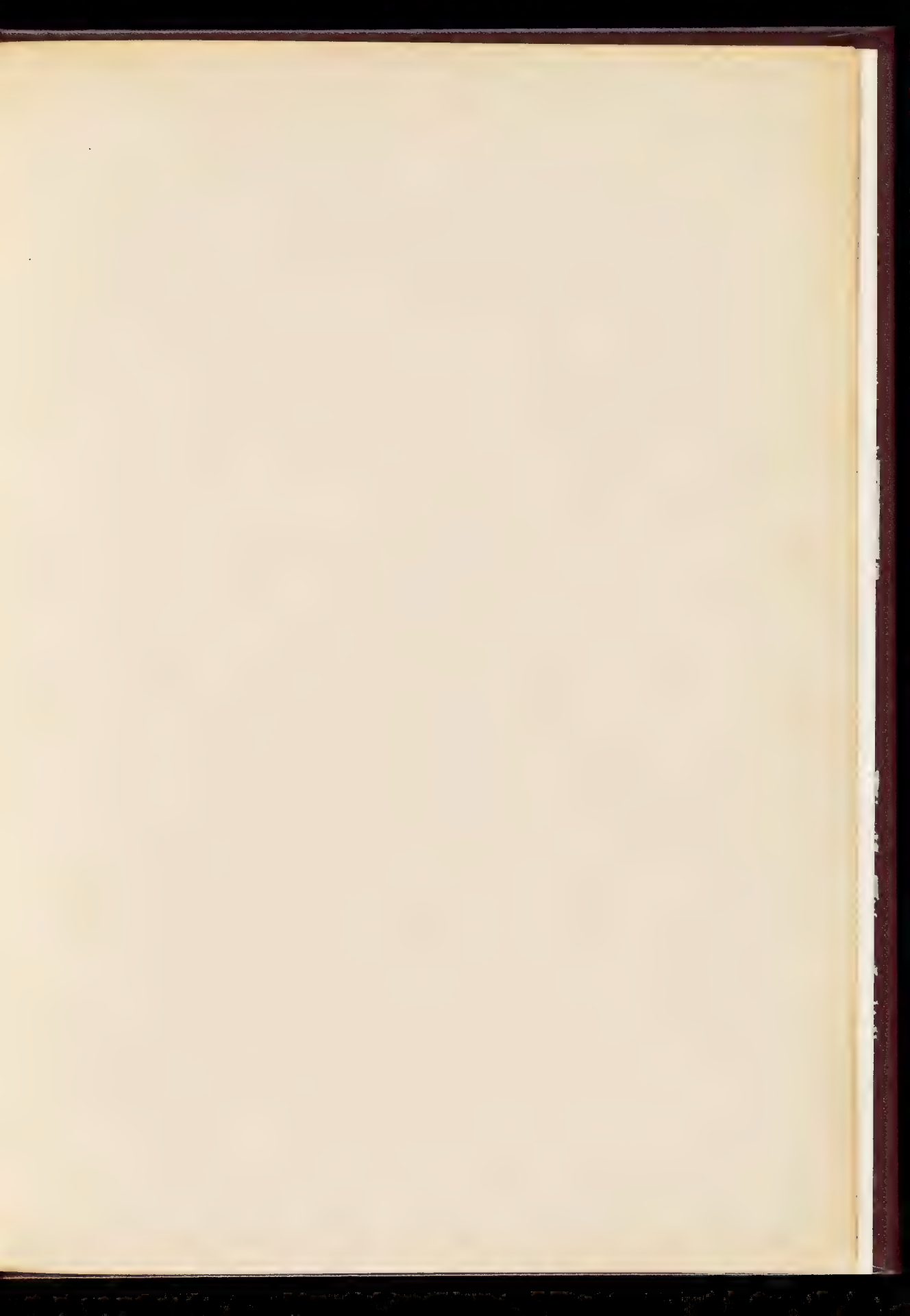


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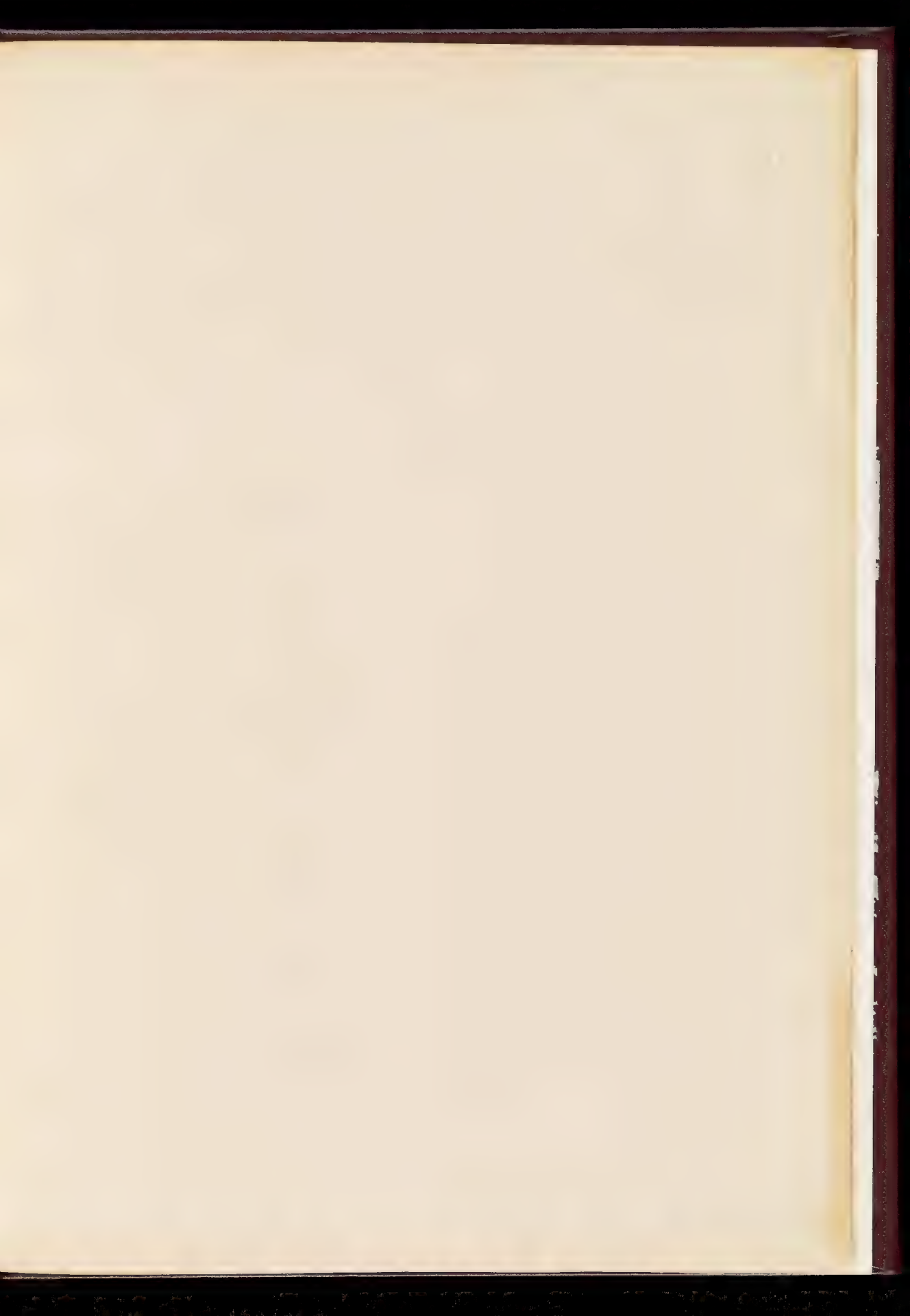
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